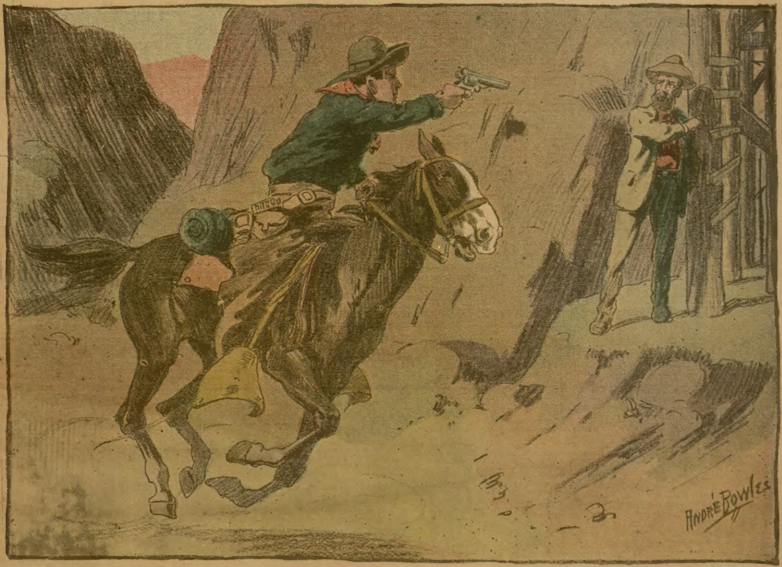
LOOK OUT FOR "A LASS O'LONDON" BEGINNING IN NEXT WEEK'S LEDGER

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XXXIV, NO. 32. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 1906. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.



"You're the fellow I want."

OLD ECKERSAL'S DEPUTY;

—Or—

A Strange Romance of the West.

By WILLIAM WALLACE COOK.

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CHAPTER I.

A RESCUE.

It was a cry for help. Mort Lindsay, every sense keenly on the alert, was more than sure of it.

The horse he was leading—equipped with a blue saddle blanket and regulation army gear—he had caught a mile farther back on the treacherous trail. Since then, as he spurred onward, he had been listening and watching for some sign of the horse's rider.

At the point where the distressed cry reached him, the trail wound itself around a scrap of Saddleback Mountain on a kind of natural shelf. On the left was an almost vertical wall of granite; on the right, a sheer descent falling three hundred feet to the waters of French Creek.

While Lindsay was positive he had heard the call for aid, he was at a loss to locate the point from which it had come. He drew to a halt and gave an answering shout.

Again the cry was repeated, this time louder and thrilling with an undertone of suddenly aroused hope. Taking a half-hitch with the bridle reins of the led horse about his saddle horn, he threw his own reins over the head of the horse he was riding, knowing the drooping lines would hold the ranch bred broncho like a rock; then he slipped from the saddle, advanced to the edge of the trail and knelt at the cliff's brink.

A muttered exclamation fell from his lips as he looked downward. Twenty feet below, caught in the scraggly branches of a small tree that grew out of a cleft in the precipice wall, was the form of a man wearing Uncle Sam's blue and the shoulder straps of an officer.

Apart from the soldier's predicament, surprising and tragic as it was, there was something else between these two men that wrought its tense significance into their strange meeting.

"My God!" was wafted from down the cliffside, "is that you, Lindsay?"

"It's Lindsay, Lieutenant Edgerton," answered the man on the brink, injecting a grim menace into his voice. "When I picked up that riderless horse, back on the trail, I hadn't any idea it belonged to you."

"Get me out of this!" came sharply from Edgerton. "This tree is pulling from the rocks. If you save my life you'll have to be quick about it."

"Why should I save your life? Are you a friend of mine? Have you any right to call on me for such a service?"

"I have the right one man always has to call on another, at a time like this! Surely you don't want me to die!"

Lindsay looked critically downward for a moment, then withdrew, walked to his horse and removed a coiled riata that swung at his saddle-cantle. A frantic plea followed him, Edgerton seeming to think the other had started away.

Uncoiling the rope, Lindsay again knelt on the edge of the cliff and allowed the noose to ripple downward until Edgerton was able to catch hold of it

"Thought I'd abandoned you, eh?" called Lindsay. "I wouldn't abandon a dog in a fix like you're in. Put that noose under your arms."

Edgerton clung to his frail support with one hand while he followed instructions with the other. While he was doing this, Lindsay bound his end of the rope around a stout boulder.

"You'll have to depend on yourself more or less," said Lindsay. "Can you climb the rope?"

"I can hang to the rope and work my way up the cliff, I guess; the wall is rough and I can secure an occasional foothold."

It was difficult work, and much of the success that attended it was due to Mort Lindsay's strong arms. When their united efforts finally brought Edgerton over the brink, he was all but spent and fell weakly down in the trail.

Lindsay gave him a hard, unfriendly glance, stooped down and released the rope and began coiling it into his hand in grim silence. When ready to remount, he cast off the led horse.

"I am much obliged to you," began Edgerton, picking himself up slowly, "for——"

An impatient exclamation escaped the other's lips as he vaulted into the saddle.

"I want none of your thanks," said he, curtly."

The officer caught his horse's reins and laid one arm over the saddle to support himself. All the while his calm eyes regarding Lindsay, fixedly.

"I don't want you for an enemy, Lindsay," said Edgerton.

"Seein' as things have turned out as they are now," returned the Deputy, darkly, "it ain't possible for you to have me for anythin' else."

"Your logic passes my comprehension. Isn't it possible for two men to be at outs on one subject and friends on other grounds?"

"Not when the subject, as you call it, means so much to me." Lindsay spent a moment tightening the buckle of his spur.

Edgerton seemed at a loss.

"The horse shied and threw me over," said he, wishing to talk, yet hardly knowing what to say.

"You West Pointers ought to take a turn at range ridin'," scowled Lindsay. "Mebbe you could sit a horse better."

"See here, Lindsay," proceeded Edgerton, looping the reins over his arm and advancing upon the Deputy with outstretched hand, "let's forget the past, and——"

"Tell me this," interrupted Lindsay, "are you goin' to Dan's?"

"That **is** where I had started for," answered Edgerton, with some embarrassment.

"What I've just done for you hasn't made and difference in your plans?"

"No."

"Then you've got more nerve than common to offer your hand to me. So long as you keep callin' at Dan's you know as well as I do that there can't be any love lost between us."

Edgerton withdrew his hand and gave a slight frown.

"Have your way," said he. "Anyhow, I shall never forget what you've done for me."

"Don't," returned Lindsay, darkly. "Just remember, Edgerton, that I could have left you to your fate, if I had wanted to, and then there wouldn't have been no more callin' at Dan's."

Lindsay whirled his horse and spurred a dozen feet along the trail. Halting again, he turned in his saddle and flung back:

"And there's another thing you don't want to forget. I'm watching what goes on at Dan Eckersal's, and if you don't carry yourself like an officer and a gentleman, I'll make it my principal work in life to get hands on you, bring you back here and throw you over. That's all!"

Lindsay faced around in his saddle, put his horse on the gallop and vanished from the officer's sight on the other side of the spur.

CHAPTER II.
THE PURSUIT.

A frown clung to Lindsay's brows as he pushed rapidly down the descent of Saddleback Mountain and struck into the flat country that intervened between Old Saddleback and the distant foothills. His eyes roamed the trail and the country that bordered it on either hand, sharply and restlessly.

He was not sorry that duty had brought him that way or that fate had placed it in his power to save Edgerton. The discontent, which he so plainly manifested, was due to other causes.

A mile from the foot of Saddleback Mountain the main east and west trail, originally opened by trekking freighters for the mines in the foothills, was crossed by an Indian trail leading due north and south. When Lindsay reached the point where the trails crossed, a dust cloud was visible at the north, and he drew rein to learn who the traveler or travelers might be.

The cloud approached rapidly and was suddenly whipped aside by a freshening wind. Four horsemen were revealed, brawny fellows, well mounted and well armed, riding like men with a well defined purpose and a determination to execute it.

An ominous shadow swept across Lindsay's face. When the four came close enough they halted and answered Lindsay's greeting with sullen nods.

"We're ridin' different trails, Zack Weatherby," said Lindsay, "but it's a pretty safe guess we're after the same man."

The leader of the four pulled off his broad brimmed hat and knocked the dust from it against the pommel of his saddle.

"Seein' as how Eb an' me was bunkies, an' Jack, an' Larry, an' Pete here knowed him purty nigh as well as I did, your guess is so safe, Mort Lindsay, that it ain't no guess at all."

"Where you ridin'?"

"To O'Kee."

"What clews have you got that take you to O'Kee?"

"Nothin' very definite. If the feller that did that piece o' work is the man we think he is, he's an Easterner——"

"Must be an Easterner," spoke up Larry Gerow, from Zack Weatherby's right. "He stopped at my shack and I had him to supper, which gives me a chance to seize him up. He looked to be fifty, had some gray in his hair and was wearin' a white handkerchief around his neck. Now," and Gerow squinted up his eyes knowingly, "that white handkerchief told on him—it was the first I'd seen since I struck these diggin's."

"And he wore a blue flannel shirt," returned Lindsay, a trifle sarcastic at the expense of Larry's reasoning. "It wasn't the white article of the East, mind you, but blue flannel."

"I've seen blue flannel shirts in York state," spoke up Jack Demerest, "lots of 'em."

"And I think," continued Lindsay, "that Larry will find white handkerchiefs in O'Kee, if he looks close enough."

"We've got our minds made up that the skulkin' varmint is an Easterner," struck in Zack Weatherby. "Bein' an Easterner, he'd strike out for the nearest railroad p'int and try to get back to where he belongs. The nearest railroad p'int is O'Kee, so that's the reason we're goin' there."

"You're wrong," answered Lindsay; "the man would make for the foothills."

"Well, you go to the foothills, if you want to. We're for O'Kee; and I'll lay a dozen ounces ag'in a Chink wash-ticket that we'll have the murderer while you're still dodgin' around among the uplifts."

Lindsay spurred closer to Weatherby and a flash leaped into his black eyes as he said:

"If you do capture the man, it's well for you to remember that he belongs in the O'Kee jail. Don't you try to take the law into your own hands—Dan won't stand for it."

Weatherby and his companions exchanged significant glances.

"Where's Dan?" Weatherby asked, finally. "Is he doin' the work the County pays him for, or has he turned it over to his Deputy?"

"You can count on Dan Eckersal to do his duty," replied Lindsay, "and you can count on his deputy to help him. That's all."

Lindsay whirled his horse to make for the blue of the distant hills.

"Jest a minute!" called Weatherby. Lindsay halted. "You got that scrap of cloth Eb was holdin' in his hand?" Weatherby added.

"Yes."

"Let's have a look at it."

Lindsay took from his pocket a bit of frayed blue flannel. One side was a ragged tear; the other was straight and edged with two white buttons.

Weatherby's companions clustered about him while he examined the piece of cloth.

"I guess we can identify the villain all right when we overhaul him," was Weatherby's comment as he returned the scrap to Lindsay. "Now, lads, let's ride. We've lost too much time as it is."

With a rattle of spurs and a swish of quirts, the four were off. Lindsay set as swift a pace along the other trail.

Something like a half a mile beyond the place where he had encountered Weatherby and his companions, a speck of white at the trailside met his alert eye. Another moment and he had possessed himself of a white handkerchief, creased cornerwise in a way that proved it had been bound about some one's throat.

The knot might easily have become loosened so that the wind could whisk the handkerchief away. The wearer, if preoccupied with matters appertaining to his safety, would have failed to notice the loss of the handkerchief at the time it had fluttered from his neck.

Lindsay wrinkled his brows, compressed his lips and rode on at a more rapid gait. The ranch of Bart Givens lay midway between Saddleback Mountain and the foothills.

Givens ran out of his house as Lindsay rode up and shouted to him to stop. The Deputy drew rein.

"Have you seen a stranger pass this way, Bart?" inquired Lindsay, before the rancher had a chance to speak. "A man about forty, grayish hair——"

"There hasn't a soul passed this way since sun-up," broke in Givens.

"If the fellow passed at all it must have been durin' the night."

"In that case I shouldn't have seen him. What's all this I hear about Eb Sanderson being killed and robbed, over on French Creek?"

"That's what happened, Bart. The stranger I just spoke to you about is the one supposed to have done it."

"Poor, old Eb!" exclaimed Givens. "Tell me about it, Mort."

"I'm in a tearin' hurry, Bart, but I can give you the gist of it. Weatherby was in O'Kee, last night, and when he got back to the cabin he found Sanderson dead on the floor. There had been a hard fight and pretty near all the furniture in the cabin was out of place and in disorder. A bag of dust belongin' to Eb was gone.

"Weatherby rode over and told Dan, and Dan rode to the cabin and made an investigation. A stranger stopped at Gerow's place, last night, and had supper. Circumstantial evidence points to that stranger as bein' the man . I'm after him."

Without pausing for another word, Lindsay was off at full speed. It was his duty, as Deputy Sheriff, to capture the murderer, and he felt positive that he was on the right track.

Ten minutes after leaving Bart Givens' ranch he was still further encouraged. A freighter passed him.

The freighter had seen a stranger on foot, following the road to the Tuolumne Mine. This stranger answered the description of the fugutive.

A little while after seeing the man the freighter had passed a dead horse beside the trail. The rider of the animal had not taken the trouble to remove saddle or bridle—in itself a suspicious circumstance since, in that country, a horseman's equipment was worth many times the price of a horse.

The freighter had removed the gear and had it in his wagon. Lindsay rode close and took a look at it, then hurried on.

At the spot where the Tuolumne road forked from the main trail he changed his course and pushed rapidly into the hills. A conviction was borne in upon him that he was drawing close to his quarry.

The great Tuolumne flume paralleled the road for a long distance, its trestlework crawling back and forth through a narrow valley like some gigantic centipede. In the shadow of the flume, Lindsay galloped for at least an hour, the roar of the rushing water in his ears and his face spattered with the falling spray.

The dust of the trail, drenched with the moisture, held the footprints of a man. Lindsay, wise as an Indian in reading such signs, knew that he might expect to encounter the fugitive at any moment.

Anticipating the necessity of being prepared, he drew his revolver as he galloped. Presently a turn in the ravine brought him point blank upon the pedestrain—a slender man of medium height, wearing a suit of corduory and a slouch hat.

The man had taken alarm at the pounding of hoofs in the dam trail; he was at a halt, a hundred feet from the Deputy, and watching the turn in the ravine with sharp eyes.

"You're the fellow I want!" shouted Lindsay. "Stand where you are!"

Simultaneously with the words he levelled his weapon. A reckless oath fell from the fugitive's lips and he sprang to the shelter of one of the beams supporting the flume.

CHAPTER III.
INTO THE FLUME.

Owing to the noise of the torrent overhead, Lindsay was at a loss to know whether the man grasped the order or not. Be that as it might, however, the pointed weapon spoke a language there was no mistaking.

It was evident that there was to be a skirmish and the Deputy galloped for the trestle, the vicious bark of his six-shooter punctuating his rapid advance.

The shooting was ineffective, since the beam and other timbers of the trestlework all but hid the target. And another thing: the target was swiftly ascending the beam by means of cross-pieces which made of it a sort of ladder.

These primitive ladders were constructed at frequent intervals along the flume for the convenience of the Tuolumne inspector. At this point the water-way was some fifteen feet from the surface of the ground; along its rim ran a gangway consisting of a single plank.

Bending low in the saddle, Lindsay pushed through the trestlework to the opposite side. Here he was greeted with a defiant yell from overhead, quickly followed by the report of a revolver and the snarling hiss of a bullet.

The bullet flew wide, but the next might not prove so considerate and the Deputy flung himself from his horse and dived under the timbers.

Here, for a space, there was a deadlock. The fugitive, lying along the plank gangway, was secure against hostilities from below; and Lindsay, sheltered by the framework of the flume, had little to fear from above.

Such a condition could not endure for long if the Deputy proposed to capture his man; and this particular deputy was not the one to shy at dangers lying along the path of his duty.

Thrusting his revolver into his belt, he began to climb, making his way up the inner side of the beam and reaching around it to grasp the projecting cross-pieces. Thus he continued to shield himself until he reached the bottom of the flume.

It was then necessary that he take to the other side of the beam if he gained the gangway. Herein lay his greatest peril, which he thought to lessen by swift work.

Throwing himesif to the opposite side of the timber, his agile limbs carried him at speed up the side of the box. To his surprise no hostility marked the last stage of his ascent. When he drew himself onto the gangway he learned the reason: The suspect had taken flight along the rim of the flume.

Weapon in hand, the fugitive was fifty feet away. He turned to look back just as Lindsay started to follow him.

This move was disastrous for the fugitive. He lost his footing on the narrow plank, tottered, and barely saved himself a fall by flinging out his hands and catching the plank as he slipped over its edge.

His revolver dropped to the ground and he lay half on and half off of the gangway, breathless, but glaring his defiance at the approaching officer. Lindsay halted within a yard of him.

"Get up!" the Deputy ordered, grimly.

"What do you want with me?" the other asked, drawing himself to safety and dividing his shifty glances between Lindsay, the ground below, the waters of the flume and the next ladder—which was too far away to cut much figure in the proceedings.

The Deputy's eyes were traveling over the speaker. Under the corduroy coat was a blue flannel shirt, a piece of cloth torn from the opening at the throat.

Besides, the man answered Gerow's description. He was probably fifty and there were threads of gray in his hair.

"You know why I want you," said Lindsay, sternly.

"I tell you I don't!" protested the man. "I was walking to the Tuolumne Mine to see if I couldn't hire out there. All at once you hove into sight and began blazing away at me."

"Why didn't you obey orders and wait until I came up? What did you try to run away for?"

"I didn't hear any order—just saw you bearing down on me like a whirlwind, revolver in hand. That was enough to make a man jump for shelter, wasn't it?"

"Where did you come from?"

"O'Kee."

"Where was you last night?"

"I stopped with a miner over on French Creek."

"What were you in such a hurry for? You left a dead horse and all your riding gear on the main trail. You ran that horse to death, and were in such a rush you didn't have time to bother with the saddle and bridle."

"If I secured employment at the Tuolumne I was going to send back after my riding equipment."

"There's no use beatin' about the brush," said Lindsay, cynically. "Murder and robbery were committed on French Creek last night and there ain't any doubt in my mind but that you're the guilty man. I'm the Deputy Sheriff of this county and you'll have to go with me. If you can prove your innocence, all right; if you can't, you'll have to take what's coming."

"This is an outrage!" cried the other, angrily.

"You'll be safer in custody than you will at large," pursued Lindsay, ignoring the other's protest. "Friends of the murdered man are looking for you and a lynching would probably follow if you fell into their hands. Have you another gun?"

"No."

"What do you call yourself?"

A sudden pallor had leaped into the other man's face. He hesitated before he answered:

"My name is Philip Mortimer," said he, finally.

Lindsay gave a start, well nigh imperceptible, and renewed attention to the speaker's face.

"Dan Eckersal is the Sheriff, isn't he?" Mortimer asked, moving uneasily under the sharp, black eyes.

"Yes," replied Lindsay, slowly, "Dan is the Sheriff."

"And you're his Deputy, I believe you said?"

"That's what I said. Now, you walk the plank until you reach the next ladder. When we touch ground again I'm goin' to have a look through your pockets."

Mortimer slowly started along the gangway, limping painfully as he went. In a few moments he came to a halt.

"This foot bothers me," he observed. "I hurt it when I slipped over the plank." He knelt down facing Lindsay.

The Deputy put up his revolver and drew closer. "Let's see where you're hurt," he returned.

Mortimer busied himself with his shoe and Lindsay, also bent down. Then, quick as a wildcat, Mortimer flung out his arms, crooking one about the Deputy's throat and seeking to clutch the handle of the revolver in his belt.

"That's your game, is it?" muttered Lindsay, catching in a grip of steel the wrist of the hand that was trying for the weapon.

"You'll not take me alive!" cried Mortimer, furiously.

A struggle followed that threatened to hurl both antagonists from the gangway. Mortimer, desperate and reckless, did not seem to care what disaster overtook him, if the officer was also made to share it.

This way and that they writhed, now leaning over the waters of the flume and now, bending dizzily outward on the opposite side of the gangway. On ordinary ground, Mortimer would have been no match for Lindsay, but this insecure foothold made demands on the Deputy which left him unable to use his whole strength in quelling the prisoner.

In resisting Mortimer's reckless frenzy, Lindsay had also to guard against a fall from the plank—particularly on the landward side. So fiercely did he contend his adversary's strength on this point that a sudden inward push caused him to lose footing in the slippery gangway.

Down he went into the racing torrent of the flume, dragging Mortimer with him. A great wave of water shot upward into the air and the two men, locked in a fierce embrace, were swept at race-horse speed in the direction of the Tuolumne placerings.

CHAPTER IV.
A DESPERATE PRISONER.

It was five miles from the mountain reservoir where the flume received its waters to the gravel bank at the Tuolumne workings where the waters were discharged,—five miles "as the crow flies," but three times that distance if the tortuous windings of the structure were taken into account.

In these fifteen miles the flume had a "fall' of five hundred feet, so that the swirling waters poured through the great wooden box like a cataract. Lindsay and Mortimer, mere human drift in the maelstrom, were thrown cruelly against the sides of the flume while hurling onward.

Mortimer, half-strangled and but semiconscious, as a result of his buffetings, clung despairingly to the more vigorous form of the Deputy. The latter, blinded by the water, held to his prisoner with one hand and with the other attempted again and again to grip the stay-rods that crossed the top of the flume.

As often as his groping fingers were dashed against a rod they were torn away by the fierce momentum of the downward rush; but at last, just when hope was beginning to die in the officer's breast, he and his prisoner were thrown against the outer wall just at a point where the flume described a sharp arc conforming to a bend in the valley.

For the fraction of a moment the two forms lodged against a brace in the wall, and the brief stay proved their salvation. Double rods with turnbuckles, reinforced the box at his place and Lindsay succeeded in grasping one of the braces.

Lifting his head above the flood, he gasped his lungs full of the clear air; and then slowly, for the task was one of great difficulty, he dragged himself and his helpless prisoner to the gangway. There, for a space, they both lay, dripping and spent.

Owing to the great force of the current, interrupted and turned almost at right-agnles to its course, this curve in the flume was a source of much solicitude to the Superintendent at the Tuolumne, and a ladder was conveniently at hand for the inspector's use.

When he had recovered, somewhat, Lindsay sat up and at once got his eyes on the ladder. His hat was gone, his revolvers were lost and his drenched clothing was snagged in a dozen places.

But he had not lost the bit of tell-tale flannel which had been found in Eb Sanderson's death-stiffened fingers. Fate had spared that, the most important link in the chain of evidence leading to Mortimer..

The Deputy's right hand was wounded and bleedin. He made light of the injury, untied the water-soaked handkerchief at his neck, wrung it dry and bound up the hand.

At that moment, Mortimer groaned and rose to a sitting posture. His ordeal had left him a sorry looking spectacle.

He had not only lost his hat, but one of his shoes, as well. A trickle of blood ran from under the mop of hair that fell over his forehead.

"If any one had said we could tumble into that flume and come out alive,' he remarked, "I would never have believed it."

"You were the cause of it," said Lindsay, curtly. "What good did that piece of foolishness do you? You're my prisoner, still."

"You haven't got me to the jail yet," was the sullen response

"I'll land you behind the bars, all right, but we're goin' to Eckersal's first."

"I don't want to go to Eckersal's," growled the prisoner.

Lindsay regarded him suriously.

"You're goin', just the same. Some of Eb Sanderson's friends are in O'Kee, lookin' for you, and they might try to take the law into their own hands. I'll have to have a talk with Dan, concernin' what's to be done with you."

"You'll never get me to Eckersal's alive,' said Mortimer, stubbornly.

"Then I'll take you there the other way—it doesn't make much difference to me." There was cool determination in Lindsay's voice. "There's a ladder," he added, pointing. "Climb down. I'll be right after you and it won't be well for you if you try to bolt."

Mortimer hesitated for a moment, then crawled to the ladder and started down. Lindsay followed him closely, jumping from the cross-pieces and landing on the ground almost as quickly as Mortimer did.

There was something else in Lindsay's pocket which the waters of the flume had not wrenched away. This object was a pair of handcuffs.

Before the prisoner could fairly realize what had happened, the handcuffs had been adjusted to his right wrist and his captor's left—a tie between freedom and the law, which there was no breaking

"Come along," said Lindsay, starting back along the flume toward the place where he had left his horse.

"Are you going to take me to Eckersal's in this condition?" demanded the prisoner. "It's a long trip and I'd like to dry my clothes some where and get something to eat, before we start out."

The contention was reasonable and Lindsay tactically yielded the point.

"You're a stranger in these parts," he said, as they walked along, "yet you seem to know something about Dan Eckersal."

"I heard of him over on French Creek," parried the prisoner. "What I heard there, and what you've told me, is all I know about him."

Lindsay did not believe the statement, although it was plausible enough. Just what impelled the doubt of his prisoner's veracity, he did not know.

When they reached the place where the horse had been left, the animal was not in evidence. The Deputy had dismounted so hurriedly he had not thrown the reins over the broncho's head; hence the broncho, feeling himself at liberty, had wandered away.

A brief search of the ravine failed to reveal his whereabouts, and it was possible that he had returned to Eckersal's.

"We've got to walk, have we?" queried the prisoner, looking apprehensively at his unshod foot.

"That's the way it looks," returned the vexed Deputy.

"Do you think I can walk to Eckersal's like this?"

"Maybe you'll have to," returned Lindsay, grimly. "Your neck is of more concern to you just now, than your feet."

"It doesn't make much difference whether the lynchers do the work or whether they leave it to the law. I haven't any friends in this country and you fellows will make a case against me."

"You'll get the benefit of every honest doubt," replied Lindsay. "I'm not sayin' that there is any doubt, because, so far as I'm concerned, I'm dead sure that you're the man we want."

Mortimer, muttered something under his breath and pushed back the hair from his forehead. "You might tie up this wound, it seems to me," he added.

Lindsay looked at the wound and saw that it was hardly more than a scratch.

"That injury is nothin' to speak of," he answered. "A miner I know, lives a little ways from here and we'll go to his cabin and put ourselves in trim for the walk to Dan's."

The ravine was retraced to a point where a smaller gulch entered it from the right. Lindsay conducted his prisoner into the gulch and to a cabin a hundred yards or more from its mouth.

The owner of the cabin was not at home, but the door was unlocked and the officer led his prisoner inside. A fire was built in the miner's stove, and the miner's larder was raided for a meal.

The key of the handcuffs was some where in the Tuolumne flume and Lindsay could not release Mortimer if he wanted to. In building the fire, in preparing the meal and in drying their clothes, the two were obliged to move around the cabin together.

Mortimer had relapsed into a sullen silence, his shifty eyes roaming about the cabin's one room, from time to time, as though in search of some weapon which would give him an advantage over his captor. The miner, however, must have taken his weapons with him, for there were none in sight.

A pair of discarded boots were found and Mortimer drew one of them on his foot in lieu of the shoe he had lost. While they were steaming themselves dry by the hot stove, Lindsay took occasion to search his prisoner.

All he could find in the man's pockets was a bundle of water-soaked letters, tied with a piece of string.

"Those letters are my personal property," cried Mortimer, drawn out of his stubborn [illegible] at sight of the packet in Lindsay's hands.

"I understand that," said the Deputy.

"Throw 'em into the stove!"

"No; they may be useful, later on." Lindsay put the letters into his breast pocket.

Mortimer, scowled blackly, started to speak, but bit his lip on the words. Under the blue flannel shirt, next to the prisoner's bare skin, was found a buckskin belt.

Upon examination, the pockets of the belt were found to contain a dozen gold double-eagles and a quantity of gold-dust and small nuggets.

"This tallies with what was stolen from Eb Sanderson," commented Lindsay, darkly.

"I came by the stuff honestly, just the same," insisted Mortimer, in a tone of surly defiance.

"You'll have a hard time proving it," said Lindsay.

The meal out of the way, there was a wait until sun-down; then the Deputy, using a stump of a pencil which he found in the cabin, wrote a note and placed it on the table. The note ran as follows:

"Nate: Found it necessary to make myself at home in your wickiup while you were away. Dan will square you for the damages.
"Mort Lindsay."

Immediately after writing this note, the Deputy led his prisoner out in the gulch and they started on the trail to Eckersal's. Lindsay felt that the gathering dusk would help him to escape the vigilance of any of Sanderson's lawless and revengeful friends who might be abroad looking for the murderer.

Where the Tuolumne trail joined the main road a freighter passed with a load for some mine in the hills. Lindsay drew Mortimer into the brush while the wagon creaked by.

When Bart Givens' place was reached, a detour was made to avoid passing the front of the house. Mortimer found fault with these precautions, but Lindsay silenced him with the curt statement that they were taken for his own good.

By the time Saddleback Mountain was reached, Mortimer was grumbling with the fatigue of their journey. The boot was ill-fitting and uncomfortable, and the shoe on his other foot was stiff from its drenching; he wasn't used to walking, anyway.

Lindsay halted for half an hour and then began the ascent of the mountain. Twice the captor rebelled and hung back, compelling the Deputy to almost drag him.

As they reached the place where the trail rounded the scrap of the mountain, the moon looked brightly out from behind a cloud, revealing the sheer wall on one side and the black chasm on the other.

Mortimer was on Lindsay's left and walking within a foot of the precipice. Suddenly, when close to the spot where Edgerton had been rescued, the prisoner, with a reckless laugh, threw himself over the brink.

Lindsay had absolutely no warning of this rash move. Mortimer, no doubt, had acted on the spur of the moment; realizing that he was face to face with the inevitable, he sought to encompass the Deputy's destruction at the same time that he wrought his own.

As he slipped from the ledge, the weight of his body drew Lindsay flat down on the rocky trail. Throwing out his right arm, the Deputy twined it about the base of a boulder which some teamster had rolled there to fend his wagon's wheels from the brink.

The boulder alone saved Lindsay's life. The hold it afforded him prevented him from being dragged into eternity by the form that swung from his left wrist.

Only the handcuff, with its short length of chain, kept Mortimer from meeting his coveted fate in the waters of French Creek. The strain on the Deputy's wrist was benumbing in its intensity—so much so that a groan was wrenched from his lips and he felt that he could not endure the ordeal for very long. A few minutes of wearing torture—and the end must come!

CHAPTER V.

A FRIEND OF SANDERSON'S.

Of all the young men who had ever served Dan Eckersal in the capacity of deputy, Mort Lindsay was the one he liked the most. Lindsay was perfectly fearless, strong as a horse and with a resilient hardihood that no adversity could conquer.

In his present emergency these qualities stood him in good stead. His left arm bore the brunt and the shackles ground deeply into his wrist.

It seemed as though the swinging weight might drag the handcuff over his hand. He clinched his fist rigidly, for he had no mind to lose his prisoner if he could help it.

Hugging the rut of the trail with his knees, and the rock with his right arm, he lifted his voice again nad again in a hoarse appeal for aid.

The trail was fairly well traveled by day, but then it was night and the echoes of his cry bounded back to him from the cliff, mocking his helplessness. Above the angle of the cliff's brink, stark in the moonlight, rose Mortimer's hand and forearm; the rest of the prisoner's form was shrouded in the darkness below.

Lindsay's starting eyes were fixed on the hand and arm as he continued to shout for aid. At the moment when he felt that the bounds of endurance were all but passed—when his call sank to a panting, impotent undertone, a gallop of hoofs rang out some where in the trail behind him.

They drew near and halted quickly, a horse snorting and leaping backward.

"Whoa, Blazes, confound you!" exclaimed a voice. "Do you want to toss me into kingdom come by way of French Creek? Who's that callin'? Who's that in the trail, there?"

"Quick, for the love of heaven!" gasped Lindsay. "Bring a rope—hurry!"

A muttered exclamation escaped the newcomer. Lindsay heard him dismount and, in another instant, the newcomer was beside him.

Questions were unnecessary. The man could grasp the tragic situation at a glance, and proceeded immediately and without comments to effect a rescue.

Kneeling on the brink, he caught Mortimer by the wrist and lowered the noose of the rope which he had brought, obedient to Lindsay's request.

"Grab that!" he shouted to Mortimer.

"He won't help himself," said Lindsay, relieved somewhat by the newcomer's hold on the prisoner. "Drop the noose over his head——"

"He'd be a fool if he didn't help himself, Mort," said the man, whom the Deputy now recognized as Tom Hughes, another of Sanderson's friends from French Creek diggins. "He has laid hold of the rope all right. Let it drop over your head and under your left arm," Hughes added, addressing the prisoner. "Now you've got it!"

Hughes laid back on the rope and Lindsay rose to his knees and gave what aid his spent condition would allow. Between them, Mortimer was hauled over the brink and into the trail.

Mortimer's peril, or something else, had discouraged his ambitious attempt at self-destruction, for he had worked as well as he could to save himself.

As he lay in the moonlit trail, breathing heavily, the Deputy crouching at his side, Hughes looked down at him with surprise and suddenly aroused suspicion.

"That was a predicament for your life, Lindsay," remarked Hughes.

"Right you are, Hughes," said Lindsay. "Another minute and it would have been all up with the two of us."

"Did the fellow drop over?"

"He threw himself over."

"Now what do you think of that!" exclaimed the astounded Hughes. "Threw himself over! He must have been in quite a taking to do that. Who is he? What has he done?"

Being an officer of the law, and knowing the temper of Sanderson's friends, Lindsay feared to have it generally known that Sanderson's slayer had been capulred. It would be an invitation for friends of the murdered miner to take the law into their own hands.

"He's my prisoner, Hughes," said Lindsay, shortly.

"You're not tellin' me much more than I've already made out," said Hughes, drily. "What has the fellow been up to?"

"You'll know before long," replied the Deputy.

Hughes stooped over and stared critically at Mortimer.

"I know now," said Hughes, turning and making for his horse.

"Wait!" called Lindsay, sharply. "Where are you goin', Tom Hughes?"

"O'Kee," answered Hughes, facing about.

"Now, look here," went on Lindsay, "if you're bound for O'Kee to see Zack Weatherby I don't think it's best for you to go—tonight."

Hughes coolly adjusted his reins and swung into his saddle.

"No?" he returned. "I'm goin', just the same."

"I want to use your horse——"

"Goin' to take that man to the O'Kee jail?" broke in Hughes.

"Not till morning."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't think it's a safe place for him."

"I guess you can get along without my horse, Mort. If you're bound for Dan's you haven't much farther to go."

Lindsay started to speak, but Hughes spurred off at a gallop, coiling his rope as he went. He left Lindsay in an uncomfortable frame of mind.

"Hughes will tell Sanderson's friends I've captured you," said Lindsay, to Mortimer, "and they'll be pretty apt to try and take matters into their own hands. We've got to get to Eckersal's in short order, do you hear? Get up and let's be moving."

"I'll go you," said the prisoner, with unexpected alacrity. "I had an idea come to me, while I hung over that cliff, and it's strange it didn't come to me before. Sanderson's friends are not going to do anything with me, and neither are you, nor Eckersal. You're going to give me a good horse, leave me that swag, and set me on the road to the British possessions."

This brazen speech surprised Lindsay.

"You admit that you killed and robbed Eb Sanderson?"

"Sanderson wouldn't have been hurt if he had left me alone. He was weighing his day's clean-up when I looked through his cabin window. I went in and asked him to turn the dust over to me and he tried to lay me out with a dirk. What I did I did in self-defense. How long will it take that man, Hughes, to get to O'Kee?"

"Two hours, if he rides hard."

"He'll put his horse through, there's no doubt about that. He may be a little time in finding Zack Weatherby and the rest and then two hours more on the trail back to Eckersal's. I suppose we've got about five hours grace, don't you think?"

"No more than that."

"How long will it take us to reach Eckersal's?"

"Possibly half an hour."

"Is Nita, there?"

Lindsay peered sternly into the prisoner's face.

"What is it to you whether Nita Eckersal is at Dan's, or not?" he demanded.

"Nita Eckersal—as you call her—has a good deal to do with my plans. I've got to have a talk with the Sheriff—a heart to heart talk—and it mustn't be before the girl. Don't forget that. I'm figuring on my freedom——"

"You'll not get your freedom," said Lindsay, but there was a heavy foreboding at his heart as he spoke the words.

"We'll see," was the significant rejoinder, and the two set out along the trail at a swift pace.

CHAPTER VI.

AT ECKERSAL'S.

Dan Eckersal, six feet two, in his laced boots, gaunt, big boned and weatherworn, was the type of an ideal Westerner. He was fifty-five and it was his boast that he had never been east of the Missouri.

There was not a thread of gray in his black hair, and his eyes were as sharp and bright and his limbs as supple as in his more youthful years. He had been by turns a miner, rancher, store-keeper and, incidentally, the first postmaster at O'Kee; now he had come back to his first love and was a miner again, working his own placerings in Bluff Creek.

His placerings were rich and of large extent. For long he had clung to the primitive cradle as the means of getting gold from the sand and gravel, relying on the aid of Lindsay, who had been his close friend and companion for years.

The "flat" at the bend of Bluff Creek was Eckersal's bank; and so rich was it that, whenever he needed money, he had only to put in a few days work in order to secure enough funds for his most extravagant needs.

Syndicates, as well as individuals, had tried to buy Eckersal's placerings, but he spurned every offer. Why should he transfer his funds from the security of Mother Earth to a finite institution where they would be at the hazard of human honesty?

His own particular bank, there at the bend of Bluff Creek, always honored every draft he made upon it; and he would be a fool to part with it for a lot of greasy, old bank notes, whose safe guarding would prove a constant source of worry and trouble.

"No, sir," he was wont to say to those who came to buy or bond, "that gold ground is as rich as any in the country. As long as I'm above ground I'm going to hang onto it and keep it together; when I'm through with it, Nita gets a third, Effie gets a third and Mort takes the balance. They can lease, sell or give away their holdings, just as suits them; but, until I'm across the divide, there's no use trying to get hold of those placerings."

Nita was his adopted daughter; Effie was his widowed sister, who had made his house her home for years, and Mort, ever since he had come up from the Black Hills, had been his efficient helper.

There was no more popular man in the country than Dan Eckersal, and the people had shown their friendliness and confidence by electing him Sheriff and re-electing him again and again. There was much talk of other and better things for Eckersal, but he frowned upon every suggestion of this sort.

To quote his own words, the job of Sheriff was just about his size; if the people tried to send him to the Legislature or, worse yet, to Washington, he would prove a square peg in a round hole and he was not of a mind to try such experiments. He was greatly obliged for past and present favors, but would take his guns and go on the war-path if any of his misguided friends tried to thrust further greatness upon him.

Eckersal's home, in a bower of trees overlooking Bluff Creek, was a monument to the untiring labors and womanly judgment of the widowed sister, aided efficiently by the adopted daughter. Under their direction a home of comfort, almost luxury, had been wrought out of the rough materials to be found in the bleak wilderness.

On the night when Lindsay and his prisoner were making their devious way towards the house, Eckersal had taken a flying trip along French Creek in a vain attempt to find some trace of Eb Sanderson's slayer. Neither Effie nor Nita was at home when Eckersal returned from his fruitless quest.

After turning out his horse, the Sheriff entered the darkened house, flung saddle and bridle into a carner and lighted a lamp. There was a great loneliness in his heart, for he missed the two who were nearest and dearest to him.

Throwing himself into a chair, he lighted his pipe and sank into a sombre reverie. From this he was presently aroused by a sharp knock at the door.

As he opened the door, a low "Hist!" struck on his ears and a hand was thrust in, caught his arm and drew him outside. Two figures stood in the darkness, limned faintly on the Sheriff's lamp-blinded eyes.

"Is that you, Mort?" asked Eckersal.

"Yes," came back in a hissing whisper. "I've got the man I went after——"

"Good! You're sure he's the one?" There was a jubilant note in Eckersal's voice.

"There can't be any mistake," proceeded Lindsay, still in a whisper; "besides, he admits it—makes a full confession of the whole thing."

"You're afraid to take him to O'Kee because Weatherby and the rest might try to get him out of the jail—is that the reason you bring him here?"

"That's part of the reason, Dan. The prisoner has got somethin' to say to you, and the talk is nothin' that Nita or Effie ought to hear. Come over to the creek——"

"No need for that, boy," interrupted Eckersal; "the women folks are not at home."

"Not at home?" echoed Lindsay, in a surprised tone. "Where are they? Has edgerton been here?"

"Yes, the Lieutenant has been here—in fact, he rode with Nita and Effie to O'Kee, late in the afternoon. Sis and the girl are off for a visit to 'Frisco."

"Pretty sudden, wasn't it?" returned Lindsay, after a pause. "When I stopped here in the mornin' you didn't tell me anythin' about Nita going to 'Frisco."

"Nita thought it was best not to say anything about it, Mort. I'll tell you more about it later. Bring the prisoner in."

Eckersal pushed back into the house and the other two followed him. With his free hand, Lindsay dropped a bar across the door.

"Well, by glory!" muttered the Sheriff, blinking over the sorry spectacle presented by the Deputy and the prisoner. "You fellows look as though you'd had a time of it, and no mistake. What's the matter with your wrist, Mort?"

Lindsay's left wrist was swollen so that the handcuff was sunk deeply into the flesh. Every movement of the prisoner's right hand caused a twinge of pain to shoot through the Deputy's face.

Lindsay described briefly what had taken place. Eckersal had a key that would fit the cuffs and he removed them, thereby easing the Deputy's pain, considerably.

"Sit down," said Eckersal, curtly to the prisoner.

Mortimer dropped into a chair and passed a hand over his forehead. His eyes were studying Eckersal's face.

"You admit that work on French Creek, last night?" went on the Sheriff, seating himself on one corner of the table and returning the prisoner's look with interest.

"I admit the robbery; as for the rest of it, that was done in self-defense. Sanderson would have killed me if I had not got the better of him."

The prisoner's voice was calm. He spoke in the absorbed manner of one who was revolving a problem in his mind—a problem in which Eckersal bore no inconsiderable part.

"Your name," said the Sheriff.

The prisoner did not at once answer. Lindsay was at one side of the room, bathing his wrist in a basin of water. He turned to repeat the name the prisoner had given him, on the gangway of the flume, but the prisoner broke in ahead of him.

"Ah! That is Nita, I suppose. She was a mere child when I saw her last, but I should recognize her even at this late day, anywhere."

His gaze was on the photograph of a girl of eighteen or nineteen. The picture was in a home-made frame of pine cones and hung against the wall, directly in the rays of the lamp.

The prisoner's remark had a strange effect on Eckersal. He started visibly, then his brows lowered and a stern look crept into his eyes.

"How does it happen," he inquired, "that you are able to recognize that picture?"

Lindsay, his left wrist in a towel, whirled about and angrily engaged the prisoner's shifty glance. Still the captive seemed in no wise shaken.

"I will get to that presently," said he, easily. "This much I know, and will recite if for your benefit. Twelve years ago, when O'Kee was a very small town and you were the postmaster there, Mr. Eckersal, a woman and a little girl came to the place. The woman was ill of a fever, and delirious; she died without being able to give any information about herself.

"You took the little girl, Eckersal, and cared for her as though she was your own daughter. That little girl is now a young woman and is none other than Nita."

"Any one in O'Keo could have told you that much," said Eckerssal, flashing a look at Lindsay, who was standing like a statue, his eyes rivited on the prisoner's face.

"That is precisely how I learned the story, Eckersal," acknowledged the other. "It was that information that brought me to French Creek, last night. After I had had my supper with Larry Gerow, I started to come here, to your cabin. Fate took me past Sanderson's shanty, and I saw him weighing up his dust. But for that——" The prisoner broke off abruptly and passed his eyes significantly from Eckersal to Lindsay.

"You say you had started here from

(Continued on page seven.)

THE WHITE PRINCESS;

Or, THE LURE OF THE NORTH.

By WILLIAM PERRY BROWN, author of "The Mislaid Man," "Marriage by Proxy," "A Chattanooga Girl," etc.

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Begun in No. 30, July 28. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT SAUL, BUT JUDAS.

Days, weeks, drifted by, after the "Andree" steamed out through the Golden Gate, the wind being west, on that evening ebb tide.

As it was the policy to use sails as much as possible instead of steam, to save coal, a round fortnight elapsed before Sitka was reached. The winds shifting northward into obstreperous gales, made progress slow, nor were the vessels spoken 'Frisco bound.

At Walwarth House, life gradually resumed it's wonted calm and tedious everyday flow. With only two lone women to occupy themselves, amid the orderly wilderness of fine furniture, bric-a-brac, books, servants, and what not, the time passed slowly.

Sylvia soon resumed her usual state of bodily health. Her mind also recovered a sort of tone and balance, though a certain listlessness of manner that still clung to her was not encouraging. If she mourned Stanton's absence or feared for his safety, the outward symptoms grew dormant, when once she was relieved from the shadow of the presence and threats of the man she had so innocently jilted. Even the suspense she dreaded was neutralized by the dearth of news, and the natural recuperations of youth.

Sylvia had been for some time at the piano one morning, going rather listlessly through her routine practice, when a woman alighted from one of the interurban electric cars. She walked rapidly through a small, shaded park and across the lawn before Walwarth House, entering like a whiff from the breeze blowing over the bay. Her first move was to run to Sylvia and embrace her warmly, as the girl turned on the stool.

"My dearest child," said the newcomer, "don't say one word. George has told me all about it, and when I answer, I will write that he is the luckiest young man out of Oakland, if he is my brother."

"Then you have heard—he has written?" began the girl, flushing and paleing under the sudden tension. "You have had a letter?"

"To be sure," and Mrs. Anna Baird, settled herself comfortably for an enjoyable gossip. "Has not your's arrived yet?"

The girl shook her head and the sister of Stanton continued:

"That is one of the trials of living so far out in the country. Well, you have one on the way, that is one comfort. As I said to my husband——"

"Pardon me, dear Mrs. Baird, how is he—well?" Sylvia's anxiety verged on impatience. "To think that any one else should hear, sooner than I!"

"How natural we all are under similar stress of delay," remarked this lively young matron, glancing aside at the tremulously anxious girl. "The day after Mr. Baird proposed to me, off he goes to Vancouver. Only weekly mails then, my dear, no telegrams, and I nearly died."

"Do have pity on me," pleaded Sylvia. "Is he well? Did he write much about me?"

'He! Who is 'he,' I wonder?"

But Sylvia's distress so nearly verged, by this time, on anger, that Lieutenant's Stanton's sister relented.

"Oh, yes, he is well, and more than anxious about you, and that was all, out of six closely written pages, specially about himself. The rest was you, and you, and you, ad libitum, winding up with, "Anna, if you fail to write me all the news, all, mind you, I will be more than apt to forget that real seal skin I promised you, if we stop at the Pribylofs going or returning. What did he mean by all, underscoring the words, at that?"

Mrs. Baird produced some of the caramels from a silken muff, folded her hands and regarded Sylvia with great complacency, who now rose, walked the floor, and was the very opposite of her listless self of an hour ago.

"There is no doubt you are both horribly in love with each other," continued this impurturable woman. "Pardon my saying so. After you and George are married, you will both be disagreenbly frank, too, when the novelty of matrimony wears off. But, what I came especially to say to you, was that George, being ill——"

"I thought you said he was well. Oh, Anna——"

"There, there. Merely a cold, he wrote. Had he thought it serious, he would never have mentioned his ailment. It is his way, for fear of worrying us. That is the method of a too thoughtful man, all over. Where is the woman who would not rather know just how her loved ones are, than make herself sick, balancing in imagination, all her hopes and all her fears upon uncertainty?"

"Something more serious must be the matter," said the girl uneasily.

"Nonsense! It is always raining or snowing along the lower Alaskan Sea Coast. Wait until they get beyond Cape Nome, and the other side of Bering Straits. If they do not hurry up, they may have to use their dogless sleds—Pneumoslitos, I think they call them—before they use the airship. I hear Captain Cleeve intends, with one companion only, to hunt for Andree and the 'hole' which his own ancestor Syme's, said was at the Pole. Commander Cleeve is undoubtedly a first-class crank. However, George writes that the Captain is like a brother to him, so solicitous is the man for his welfare and health. But—what is the matter, my dear?"

Sylvia had drawn back at the name of Cleeve, then she pressed one hand on her heart, as if in pain. "You say," she began, "that George writes in this way about his Commander?"

"Nurses him like a brother, swears that where Stanton is, he will be, that where Cleeve goes, George shall go—they two. My brother seems elated, too, at the prospect."

The girl did not reply, but her manner betokened disapproval and anxiety, the parents of added suspense. Mrs. Baird remained comfortably obtuse, as she dreerily continued:

"In fact, my brother so harped on his Captain's solicitude, amid his pages of rhapsodies over you, that I became quite affected. I guess he hoped this insistence on Cleeve's kindness, would cause me to cheer you up with the news. Damon and Pythias, Saul and David—my dear, you remember how touching were those friendships?"

"I recall how Saul tried to have David killed, in the end," wailed Sylvia. "He hated him, in secret—ah, Anna! What a fatal, yet kindred comparison!"

"David was not slain, though. If my comparison holds good, it was Saul, not David who came finally to grief. But Saul—Commander Cleeve, is not that kind of a Saul. George believes in him——"

"That is the real danger. His Saul is worse than David's, far worse!"

"What do you mean by that, Sylvia?"

"I mean that George's Captain is not so much a prototype of Saul, as of Judas. He will betray the man who trusts him, and I must stay here, enduring all, yet knowing nothing, until it may be too late."

The girl's strange, enigmatic utterances came half sobbingly. Mrs. Baird sat silent. She did not know what to say, but slyly pushed another caramel between her demurely non-expressive lips, while she searched her small platitudinous mind for further consolation.

Miss Baranov was always so strange, so unusual in her way of looking at things, so uncomfortably unconventional, at times, it seemed a pity her brother had so completely lost his heart in that direction.

Some one pushed an electric button at the front door. Sylvia saw the postman's gray clad form wheeling down the drive, nor would she wait for the servant's tardier steps, but hurried from the room.

"At last!" exclaimed the girl, as she vanished.

CHAPTER X.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH.

Mrs. Baird sat with folded hands, enjoying the flavor of her last caramel, until Sylvia returned. This was after an interval, during which the girl read and reread enough of her lover's truly massive letter to confirm what his sister had already made known.

"You are right, Anna," said Sylvia, as the other looked up inquiringly. "But it is too late now for me to worry uselessly. I must endure and pray that the final outcome your optimism, and Aunt Sophia's faith in the goodness of God may disprove my fears. If anything could add to my hopes it is George's faith in "good old Cleeve," as he calls him.

"Appearances are often deceitful," began Anna, who loved a truism in growing ratio with it's trite indisputability. "Captain Cleeve's face, and—a—his manner, does not inspire confidence, yet he may go Saul one better, and turn out a real Jonathan—was not that David's final friend. I am a little rusty in my Biblical memories."

"What does it matter?" Sylvia wished to be alone with her immense packet, which was, in fact, a sort of Cupid's diary, written piece meal at odd moments during the long northward passage, that the reader would weary of, except, perhaps, a concluding paragraph or two which she read to her aunt, who presently appeared, thus giving the girl a chance to read, uninterrupted, all that Lieutenant Stanton had to say. Being much in love, a great part was interesting only to the girl he loved, and who loved him with a devotion which, even Cleeve's strong passion and stronger nature had been only able to ruffle with suspicions which, if unworthy, were but too strongly confirmed by Cleeve's parting manner and words.

"Whatever happens, dear one," the Lieutenant finally concluded, "three things I must implore you never to doubt: my own undying love for you; Captain Cleeve's good faith to us both: and that, when the Andree is frozen in or we find it best to leave land and water and take to the air in our "White Princess," like a bird of passage—you, my own heart's princess, for whom our airship is so well named, will be true to me, as I am always to you.

"Dearest one, what is a month, a year, for all of us, with fame and honor waiting us at, or as near, the Pole as we can go, love and you praying for our success at home, and good old Cleeve to lead the way."

For one moment, Sylvia was inclined to doubt the justice of her own lack of faith in her supplanted lover's good faith. But Cleeve's final manner and words, so ambiguous, yet terrible; also her own knowledge of Roderick's deep seated hopes and sudden disappointment: together with his formidable, not to say sinister personality, as manifested so roundly only the night before his departure, had left impressions too deep to be thus eradicated.

Again, in her semi-Russian ancestry, had descended to her an imaginative superstition—a faith in things unseen, but with the minds eye, that was, as we have seen, a sort of telepathy, second-sight, not to be done away with by every day fact or precedent.

The day wore on. Mrs. Baird, with her truisms and caramels took herself off, after luncheon. Aunt Sophia, having affairs of her own to atted, went into Oakland, shopping, leaving Sylvia to dream dreams, write letters, and otherwise busy herself more or less unsatisfactorily.

The girl was relieved when night came and one more day of the long period of waiting, waiting, that was to come, had passed. It was but a type of many, many others, more or less varied in minor matters, until the news that the Andree had safely and successfully reached Unalaska, the Pribilof Islands, St. Michaels, Nome City, and finally had passed through Bering Strait, after taking on a number of native Alaskans and Eskimos after the manner of Arctic expeditions in general.

At each stopping place, letters were dispatched to the anxious waiting ones at home. Stanton's letters to Sylvia assumed the proportions of books, almost, as day by day he jotted down the thousand and one things a lover likes to say to the girl he loves when distance, absence, and peril draw nearer those divine elements of our earthly being—the hearts, thoughts, souls and affections of mortals—when the fleshly infirmities of the body divide us, in fact, though not in hope, from all we hold most dear.

Through all, like a thread, ran the skein of his faith in the goodness and care of "poor old Cleeve," who, though "hard as steel, was good as gold." To emphasize this point the emotional slave of Cupid, enclosed a tiny nugget stick pin, said nugget being dug out of the beach sands by George, himself, while the Andree lay off Nome City, coaling, the Lieutenant at the time being in charge of a squad ashore to prevent desertions among the crew who might wish to take to the diggings.

"Silly boy!" murmured Sylvia, kissing the pin, which, thereafter, she always wore, apparently day and night.

From the Pribilofs, also came a real seal skin or two from the same solicitous hands, with injunctions to have it dressed and otherwise put through the various processes essential to fit herself and "Aunt Sophia" with suitable garments after their own tastes, all expenses there to and for, being assumed by him, the said devoted and dolefully pining, yet hopefully enduring, George, surnamed Stanton, who would be amply repaid when he saw her wearing it on his return from standing on the North Pole, etc.

Her eyes filled with tears. Well she knew how the dear fellow, on the eve of his perilous disappearance into that terrible polar desolation which might well have daunted Columbus, himself, write thus cheerily. If it was to be his last word, let it fall on her hungry, yearning, anxious heart, a message of good cheer rather than one of dolour and complaint.

Meanwhile, aside from official communications or scant interviews with press representatives, not a word came from the discarded one; the defeated suitor and omnippotent leader; in whose hand lay largely the fate, safety, and future of all. A great deal was heard of him and about him; his plans, his airship, and his ultimate hope of solving one of the two great geographical riddles left for the twentieth century to peck at, but not a personal line from Roderick Cleeve came to Walwarth House, until long after the expedition had passed through Bering Strait and disappeared in that icy Siberian Sea wherein the Jeanette, in 1881, with De Long and his brave men, went down to disaster and death.

This was a sealed envelope that had been enclosed in an official package of mail matter sent to the naval head of the Mare Island Yard, and remailed there to Walwarth House to Sylvia. It was among the last communications from the Andree, then well beyond Cape Lisburne and in about the seventieth degree north latitude. A passing Arctic whaler, homeward bound, had taken the bag and brought it within the scope of one of Uncle Sam's mail routes, thence it was forwarded by regular carriers to 'Frisco.

The usual long, delightfully long letter from George, of course, was in the lot. He concluded, in a postscript as follows:

"Good old Cleeve stands over me as I conclude, for the launch is waiting and that clumsy looking whaler is anxious to be off south, and dodge some foggy-looking bergs to the windward, that we are about to push our way through, instanter. He says he has written a line, but will not let me see it. It is to give you and your a final assurance that all is well, I guess.

"Gloomy he is, and stern to others; but to me, as we draw away from other human kind and enter these lonely seas, he is with me more than ever. So strong, so daring, so grim, so gloomy; yet, withal, so fatherly, knowing I am not strong. Fearing for my rashness, he says that I am more his care than before. Loose sight of me he will not. You see, dearest, he having loved you, knows I am precious to one little girl, if of not much importance to the world in general. Good-by sweetheart. Hope for the best, until you see us again and I once more fold you in my arms."

Turning from these lines, flushed with hope, tremulous with anxiety, yet optimism regarding "good old Cleeve," what was it Sylvia read, after opening the fast sealed envelope addressed to herself in Captain Cleeve's strong, bold pen strokes, as angular and uncompromising as the man who thus wrote her name?

"As this is our last visible chance to send back news, to the world of men and things, Lieutenant Stanton asks me to write. He has so often and at such length written you of everything and—nothing, that I have but a few words for you. One—a statement; one a request. You will do as you like about either. A jilted man has less than no claims on the woman who jilts, except as he can enforce them through his power over the other man, so to speak. Now for my two words.

"I never forget. That is the statement.

"Do you remember! That is my request. Roderick Cleeve."

Sylvia read, stared, reread, stared again, then checked a shivering tendency towards weeping without tears. As the dry, unsatisfactory sobbings choked her, she suddenly crushed Cleeve's letter as if it was a venomous thing that had bitten her, threw it from her and clasped her hands to her dry, fear-stricken eyes.

"What a horrible, horrible, horrible letter, to—write—me!" she gasped, then realizing the full measure of Stanton's confidence and helplessness, opposed to the spirit of the man in whose power he had irrevocably placed her happiness and himself, she could have shrieked aloud in an agony more keen than physical pain.

Instead, she shudderingly swooned away, and so Miss Walwarth found her, with George's letter in her hands and Cleeve's note lying crumpled in a far corner of the room.

CHAPTER XI.

A WIRELESS MESSAGE.

The weeks wore on into months, but after those disquieting letters, no definite news from the Andree seemed to reach civilization. Even the press dispatches from Alaska contained only brief, vague rumors now and then, nothing definite. Finally the long polar winter set in, the summer tide of ebb and flow, by steamers, to Juneau, Nome and other trade centers, waned, dribbled into nothingless, then ceased, as the vessels were withdrawn. To Sylvia Baranov, as Thanksgiving Day passed and the winds from the north took on a biting flavor that even the warm Chinooks, blowing athwart the southerly ocean current from Japan could not soften, the long period of newsless waiting grew more and more unendurable.

Her health was so seriously affected that Aunt Sophia became alarmed. Her tendency to dream dreams and see visions returned. Neither Christmas-tide, nor holiday making brought enjoyment. Miss Walwarth wondered, but did not complain, for though she partly knew the cause of the girl's anxiety, and in her own mind thought it hardly worth while, she was shrewdly aware that so peculiar a temperament as Sylvia's would be cheered only by allowing its somewhat fanciful turns to exhaust themselves in the girl's own way.

That Sylvia, herself, would be exhausted beyond recovery, did not dawn on her practical mind, until the mild coast winter was

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already giving way to a February touch of early spring.

Then came news, but of so disquieting a nature that Sylvia made up her mind that a further life of idle, wearing, useless waiting at Walwarth House could be no longer endured.

"It will drive me mad," said she. "Aunty, you are most forbearing, loving, and kind. But you do not know all, as I do. There is no mercy in that hard man; and George is all the more helpless, because he would not see what I saw, nor doubt, where I have never, since they left, been able to believe. Remember that last note to me from Captain Cleeve, recall George's unabated confidence, then measure the distance between George's faith and the malignity of the man at whose mercy he is. With him, almost alone together in that trackless Polar waste and in—what?"

As Sylvia paused, something in her dry, staring, piteous gaze, went deep into Miss Walwarth's kindly, yet shrewd heart. She resolved to say nay to nothing within reach or reason; for she knew the girl was at a pivotal criss, probably her face expressed enough of her feelings to prompt her to go on.

"Not even a boat under them, Aunty! He, and George, and an Eskimo, alone, alone, together in —in—oh, my God! Read it again Aunty and let us start for Nome and that new remote station whence this wireless message came. If you will not go with me I shall go alone."

Without replying, Miss Walwarth reread the following Associated Press dispatch in one of the city papers.

"The new wireless station recently established as an experiment for the benefit of whalers and other Arctic vessels so often imprisoned within the ice north of Point Barrow and elsewhere seems to be evincing its usefulness in an unexpected way, as the following from Nome proves:

"From the wireless operator at the new station in Bering Strait, comes strange words from the long missing Andree expedition, which, instead of finding its name sake may already need the same kind of looking up for itself. This news is in the form of a broken message, which seems to have been only partially intercepted by the wireless receiving apparatus on Big Diomede Island, owing, doubtless, to certain Arctic atmospheric conditions, unfavorable to wireless transmission. It came in shape of a dispatch from the whaling fleet imprisoned in the ice near Point Barrow at about 74 degrees latitude, north.

The gist of broken meanings seems to be that a carrier pigeon was shot by some one hunting on the ice. The bird carried dispatches from Commander Cleeve, some where in winter quarters, either off Wrangel Land, or in the floating ice northwestward from here, evidently north of eighty degrees, longitude unintelligible, probably about 170 west, though this last is conjective. The vital points in this message, as received at Big Diomede Island as as follows—verbatim:

"'Andree fast in ice pack—drift south—or break up—crew—cached—some—safe—white princess —left —three —in —cleeve stanton chekno—floe drift south—ice breaks—spring —if—well.'

"We give the above as it was transmitted from Bering, adding only a name that wound up the fragments from the whalers dispatch and was spelled 'Bull——'

"The third officer of the Andree is named James Buller. All of this seems to mean according to the best Arctic opinion obtainable, that the Andree, being fast in the ice and liable to drift south when the pack breaks up, if not crushed before, that Captain Cleeve, Lieutenant Stanton, and probably an Eskimo named Chekno, had started in the airship 'White Princess.' Will they be likely to meet the original North Pole balloonist fate and never be heard of again? Probably the crew were safely housed, and something was cached. This last would indicate land being close, as a cache is usually made not on deep sea floating ice, but when possible, with enough solid land under all to ensure it's being in the same place when looked for later.

It is impossible, as the warm season opens, that this fragmentary news from Cleeve and his daring coadjutors may be more fully explained, when communications open regularly with the station in Bering Strait and the whaling fleet off Point Barrow."

On another page, an editor, in commenting on the above asked: "Will we ever see the gallant Cleeve, or his two companions alive again? The Andree will probably drift south in the pack with the rest. But even the Swedish explorer of that name, whose example seems contagious, chose summer time for his aerial misadventure. He also followed an air and ocean route approved by Nansen and others who, themselves had ventured near the Pole.

"But Cleeve, out does even this depth of a recklessness that verges on insanity. He starts in winter, dragging two others, who, being under his orders, were at his mercy.

"If loss of life ensues, it is too much to say—with our present imperfect knowledge—that Captain Cleeve, alone will be, and should be, held responsible?

"They could at least have staid with the others—and by the ship."

CHAPTER XII.

AGAIN THE LURE OF THE NORTH.

The following day, Sylvia rose earlier than usual. But little was said between aunt and niece on the subject wherein both were most deeply concerned. The girl was, if anything, paler than the day before. She moved listlessly about, silent, yet evidently resolved.

At the mid-day luncheon, Miss Walwarth was late, but finally bustled in from a trip into the city. Without speaking, she laid one hand caressingly on her niece's shoulder and placed beside Sylvia's plate a railway and steamship time table and folder and a couple of tickets, duly stamped and countersigned.

The girl looked up, and it did the maiden aunt good to note the listless expression change, first to wonder, then as comprehension dawned, to unfeigned delight when the niece understood.

"We are fortunate," said Miss Walwarth, "for this time of the year. A steamer is leaving Seattle on Tuesday next. If we hurry our packing and catch the midnight express we will take that boat. I wired for accomodation and paid out a good bit of money, so my dear—we must be stirring—"

Sylvia sprang up and smothered further explanations in an embrace that some what disordered the nearby dishes on the table, and so shocked the Miss Walwarth's butler at the sideborad, that his face was as red as his liveried calves were pink.

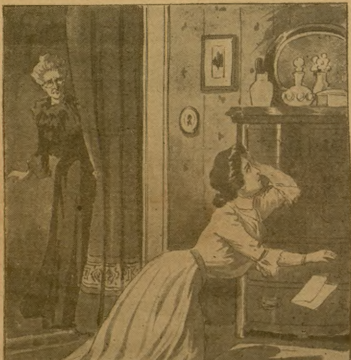
"I am sure no girl ever had such an aunt," exclaimed she. "Of course we will be ready. I can be ready in an hour, and I know we can pack every thing you will need before dinner. Let me do that. You, and Thomas, who would not look so ruffled if he knew how delighted you make me—will be glad to help you and receive your orders, if only to be rid of me and my dolorous face for a time—eh Thomas?"

Thomas appeared as if he would either choke or have appoplexy, if such unusual levity went much further, but thought better of it and brought an entree for Miss Walwarth, then started to pour some claret.

"Tea, Thomas, if you will," said his mistress, good naturedly. "You know I hardly ever take wine at luncheon."

Thomas brought tea, with an air, as if Miss Sylvia's misplaced ecstatics might account for any aberration likely to overtake his well trained, British, serving susceptibilities.

So the niece packed industriously, while the aunt attended to other affairs essential to leaving home suddenly at such behest, to go—as Anna Baird expressed it when she heard: "God only knows where; probably to her death, of pneumonia, at her age."



"What a horrible, horrible letter."

Thomas, at whom these words were flung two days later when Anna called, with more caramels in her muff and—mouth, bowed, yet ventured to opine that, as they had gotten off all right, and made the steamer Tacoma at Seattle and were doubtless then ploughing northward through Puget Sound, all was well and would end well, "hespecially ma'am," bowing respectfully, "as your brother Leftenent Stanton, is if I may hoffer my poor opinion," the very cove they're after.

The English serving man did not say "cove," but the end of the previous fairly expressed his real thought.

* * * * * * * * * * *

The first night out on the good steamer Tacoma, with a muggy rain, a chill fog, and a sullen wash of laden seas outside, the two lone women slept together, in the lower double berth of the large state room, which liberal tips and still more liberal use of passage money had secured.

Both were good sailors, having made trips down the coast and to Honolulu before, therefore, a healthy hunger at meals, and an absence from mal-de-mer, rendered even this out of season voyage to Alaska, much less a thing to be feared than to most of their sex.

"It is such a comfort to have you with me," said Sylvia, nestling closely to the one who had been always more like a mother to an early orphaned, shy, sensitive, peculiar half-Russian girl. "With you, I feel as if I was going home—to the house of my fathers, and to George."

"I, too, feel wakeful," muttered the aunt. "Too much salmon for dinner, I fear. The trip has already made you better——"

"Aunty, I should have died, after that last news, had I stayed at Walwarth House, doing nothing, knowing nothing—listen! The night before we left home, I saw George Stanton, as plainly as you could see me now, did I turn up the light again. There was a full moon and George, pointing, looked at me and said, as clearly as I say it now: "Behold your valentine!"

"Sure enough, it was Valentine's day, though I had not thought of it before. I looked out, and after that I saw, or seemed to see, I made up my mind that I would go north if I had to go alone. I can tell you this now.

"After showing me 'my valentine,' as he called it, George disappeared. The moonlight melted into the white gloom of the long Arctic night. There was my valentine, spirit-shown by him I love. Oh, Aunt Sophia! What do you think I saw?"

This strange and romantic story of the lure of the great white North, of love and bravery and extraordinary adventure, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Do not miss the pleasure and instruction of reading this story to the end. If you are not already taking the Ledger regularly or if your subscription has expired, we strongly advise you to subscribe at once and get the balance of this startling story, as well as numerous great and thrilling serials that are awaiting publication in this best of all story papers. If the reader is a boy or girl and would like one of our King Cameras free, or if you are a woman reader and would like six standard patterns without cost, please note the announcement of these premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen.

A Load Off His Mind.

I was sitting on the veranda of a New England village hotel after dinner when a townsman came edging up and entered into conversation, and by and by got around to ask:

"Do I understand that you live in New York City?"

"Yes, sir."

"Right in the city itself, and not in Staten Island or Hoboken?"

"Right in the city."

"And you have been around considerably?"

"I have been on the go for 20 years."

"Then you must know something about the restaurants?"

"A little something."

The man stopped there for a moment in an embarrassed way, and then decided to make a clean breast of it, and continued:

"A few months ago I sent Uncle Billy Williams, of this town, down to New York to do some business for me. In his expense account when he came back was 75 cents for a breakfast at a restaurant. I felt that he was trying to do me out of at least a quarter, and we haven't spoken since. Did you ever run across a seventy-five-cent beefsteak in New York?"

"I never knew that there was one as cheap as that," I replied.

"What! You didn't!"

"If Uncle Billy got one for that price then the man who served it made a great mistake, and has probably been mad about it ever since. He should have charged $1.50 at the least, and if Uncle Billy had said it was $2 you needn't have been surprised. You can get a tough old steak at that figure if you look around long enough, but if you expect anything fresh and juicy you mustn't kick at $4."

"Great heavens!" gasped the man as he turned pale. "Four dollars for a beefsteak, and I thought Uncle Billy was doing me when he claimed to have paid 75 cents! Say, I owe him an apology. I owe him a hundred. I owe him a thousand, and if you don't see me again before I go, you may know that I'm down on my knees asking him if he won't forgive and take me back to his heart again!"

Stories of Places.

There are under arrest in Paris eight men who formed a society for swindling accident insurance companies. All were insured in different companies and took turns at being knocked down and injured by carriages, carts and street cars. Two or three members of the society were always present, so that they might give evidence of the reality of the accident. The men have confessed that they each made $6,000 out of the companies during the past two years.

A youth who appeared at a public school at Leipsic wearing a red tie was ordered by his teachers to take it off. He refused to do so and a policeman was called, who confiscated the tie, and the youth was indicted, under a law of 1849, for wearing republican colors, which were "calculated to offend loyal subjects and incite to a breach of the peace." The judge ordered the prisoner's acquittal, but cautioned him against any repetition of his offense.

One of the most popular trains in India is a third-class express on the East Indian line. First and second class passengers are not admitted to it. Its success lies in the fact that it is strictly a third-class express. The train is the pride of the general manager and pays well. It is always crammed full, though no passenger is given a ticket for a journey shorter than 200 miles.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Little Margie, aged 4, was playing on the lawn, when suddenly it became very cloudy and windy. Running into the house she exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, the wind blowed the sun out!"

As small Tommy was about to climb into his chair at the dinner table his mother said: "Are your hands clean, dear?"

"'Course they are," answered Tommy. "If you don't believe it, look at the towel."

Teacher—What is 'can't' the abbreviation of, Harry?

Harry—Cannot.

Teacher—That's right. Now, Johnny, what is "don't" the abbreviation of?

Johnny—Doughnut.

Small Edgar had accompanied his mother to church and on the way home he said: "Mamma, why do they call the minister 'Neverend'?"

"He is called 'reverend,' my dear; not 'never-end,'" explained the mother.

"Well," replied Edgar, "I thought he would never end today."

Items of Interest.

A gold nugget was recently found in the craw of a chicken raised by Miss Jennie Kleim, at Falls City, Kan. Now a couple of Pinkerton sleuths have been engaged to keep watch upon that chicken, to see where it picks up its food.

A juror in a London court went to sleep the other day during the closing speech of one of the counsel. The judge had him awakened, and sternly reproved him. "My lord," said the juror, "I was under the impression that I was sworn to give a verdict according to the evidence, not according to the speeches."

The Shah of Persia is supposed never to be off Persian soil. As a matter of fact, he never is, though he does travel. To his boots there is a false sole; between the false and the real a portion of the holy earth of Persia is packed. Therefore, his royal nibs, whenever he has his boots on, is standing on Persian soil.

Miss Florence Berker, of Colusa County, California, deliberately beat her father. He was running for school trustee, and she ran against him, and beat him, after a hot campaign. He had announced his intention to oust a female teacher who is a friend of hers, and this accounts for her determined opposition to her father's election.

Pay day comes slowly to a man who watches the clock.

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All communications should be addressed to
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

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Single subscriptions to The Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. If not paid in advance, $2.00 a year, $1.00 for six months. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Post Office or Express Money Order, payable to The Chicago Ledger. One dollar must be added to all foreign yearly subscriptions to pay postage.

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True friends seldom come in bunches.

If you snore the pleasure is all yours.

Few tips comes to the waiter who sits down and waits.

Riches may have wings, but poverty is seldom a quitter.

A man isn't necessarily a millionaire because he has a million air.

Even trouble gets disgusted with a lazy man after a time and quits.

A man never realizes the goodness of his neighbors until he is sick.

All popular songs are composed, but many of them seem to be decomposed.

While all expressions of sympathy are well intended, few are really sincere.

It's easy to be content with what we have; it's what we haven't that worries us.

When he encounters a chap who says "show me!" the confidence man smiles.

If a boy doesn't earn more than he gets he will never amount to much as a man.

An alarm clock always gets busy just when a man doesn't want to be bothered.

About the only way you can arouse a mean man's conscience is to catch him at it.

A rule that refuses to work at all often gets the best of one that works both ways.

Nothing makes a man feel more important than his ability to answer the questions of a small boy.

Jealousy might be willing to listen to reason if it could be convinced that there was any such thing.

And it takes two fools with but a single thought to generate a full-sized case of mutual jealousy.

Many a man's so-called dignified silence is due to the lamentable fact that he doesn't know what to say.

It is foolish to give advice on burden-bearing to people who want you to bear their burdens for them.

And sometimes a woman's so-called love grows cold because her husband declines to hand out the cold cash.

Twelve million silk hats are sold every year in England. Yet some people wonder why the English are not more humorous.

After a man has tackled three or four enterprises and failed to succeed in any of them, he usually sets himself up as a pessimist.

In China every man's first object in life is to purchase a coffin for himself. This probably accounts for the comparative scarcity of capitalists in China. Think of the interest the people over there lose.

HONOR AMONG THIEVES;

—OR—

A STRANGE ROMANCE.

By ERNEST DE LANCEY PIERSON,
author of "A Slave of Circumstances," "The Black Ball," et

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Begun in No. 29, July 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

A FORCED ACQUAINTANCE.

Whether it was that the big man was weary as the result of his successful adventure, or so loaded with heavy booty as to prefer to take his ease, Pendrick, who had now transferred his attention to the gentleman, had no trouble in coming up with him. He was more than anxious to make the worthy burglar's acquaintance. A man who could swarm up the side of a house in such an agile way was worth knowing. Pendrick only could recall one man in the profession who could turn such a trick, and he had been forcibly removed from society about two years ago and should still be looking at life through prison bars.

This man ought to be able to tell him something about Doctor Mordecai, for he appeared acquainted with the house, he had gone about his work in such a masterly and business-like manner. The fellow wore such grotesque rags that this windfall must have come at the right moment. His profession must have been in languishing condition of late.

"Ah, you know all the fox holes, apparently," said the Detective, half to himself, as he saw the big man stop for a moment before a tall building that displayed a red glass lantern over the door inscribed, "Lodgings."

The burgler, after a glance up and down the street, disappeared inside.

Pendrick knew the "All Right Hotel," as it was called, very well. All Night Hotel would have been a more suitable name for it, and so it was called by clients who followed various mysterious pursuits between darkness and dawn.

He had been there before on the business of looking for certain persons, and the landlord held him in proper awe and respect, though he had deprived that gentleman of some paying customers.

Tonight he did not want to make himself known. The door leading to the lodgings was always ajar. One flight up there was a glass door covered by a faded curtain, and it was here that guests, permanent and prospective, got their keys or arranged for their rooms.

Pendrick slipped up the stairs and saw the big fellow come out of the office speaking to the landlord.

"Don't you beskeered about your money," he was saying. "If I ain't got the cash I got sunthin' jest as good," at the same time flashing something bright before the other's eyes.

The landlord, who was popularly known as Sharkey Butts, and who was rounder than his own barrels and of a fine mahogany color in the face, seemed to be properly moved by the display of the trinket or whatever it was.

"Shure, ye can have anything ye want," he said, "I was on'y jokin'. What's a few dollars more or less 'tween frien's? Shall I see ye——"

"See me up to nuthin'! I ain't no dude. But I tell ye what ye kin do, Sharkey, ship me up a blamed good supper and a bottle o whiskey, for I tell ye I'm holler down to the soles o' me boots, and that ain't no fairy tale."

"I'll give ye the stuff to hearten ye up, me bucko," replied the landlord, with enthusiasm. "You'll drame all night you've been boordin' a Captain of Industry to the Waldorf History, so ye will."

"Huh!" grunted the other, "I'm a Captain of Industry myself, and could give those trust fellers pints on turnin' a trick or so," and with a good-natured laugh he ran up the stairs. The landlord returned chuckling, to his office, and closed the door behind him.

Pendrick knew that he could work his will in that house as soon as he announced himself to the worthy proprietor, who had a proper fear of anyone connected, however remotely, with the law. But in the meantime, the long-legged bird he was after might escape and so he prepared to work alone.

He was close at the big fellows heels when that enterprising robber felt his way up the dark stairs. He was guided by the jingling sound the other gave forth in his progress, showing that he was weighted down with various metallic objects.

He disappeared into a room on the third floor, and for some minutes, Pendrick was an interested observer through the keyhole, as the occupant of the room, unloaded a multifarious cargo of things that seemed to range in variety from a French clock to a silver-handled tooth brush. How he was able to carry such a burden and still maintain his equilibrium in the street caused even the Detective to wonder.

After the man had duly admired his plunder, piece by piece and fondled them, he disappeared with his loot, and, from the sound, Pendrick judged that he was hiding the things away.

He recognized the man now. He had suspected all along who it was when he saw how he had clambered up the wall of that house.

This gentleman was the only one he ever had known capable of a like feat, only at the present time he should have been breaking stone or following a similar pursuit, up the river. Had he escaped? Pendrick's thoughts were broken by a step on the stairs, and when he peered over the balustrade he saw that it was the waiter bringing up the man's supper on a tray.

Pendrick slipped down and met the young man half way.

"I'll jest relieve ye o' that, sonny," he said pleasantly to the pimple-faced youth with the charger, who did not seem at all surprised to have a man pop up suddenly in the dark.

"Who are you?"

"I'm a friend o' the gent that called for the grub and I want to play a little trick on him. See that," and he held up a silver dollar.

"Yes, I see it. What of it."

"I'll give you that for the loan of your apron a few minutes. Oh! ye needn't think I'm goin' to run off with the lush and stuff, its jest a joke on me pal, me boy, that's all. You can foller at a distance ef ye want to and see me go in with the grub."

"Oh, well, then I'll go ye. But I don't see the pint."

"That's the pint," replied the Detective, as he took the apron, tied it around him, and stuffed his cap in his pocket. He calculated that with only a candlelight in the upper room he would not be recognized at once, and that after that it did not matter.

The young man followed him to the door of the room, but as soon as he saw Pendrick knock at the door he had no further fears regarding the destination of the provender and took himself off.

"Who's there?" growled a voice from within.

"Supper," bawled out the Detective.

"Oh, yes, an' its time ye got here," as the door was opened just far enough to permit Pendrick to wriggle in.

The big fellow took the dishes off one at a time and laid them on the table that occupied a corner of the room. He did not look at the Detective. Perhaps if he had he would have suddenly lost all appetite for his meal.

The bottle of whiskey tempted him so much that he stopped to take a swig out of it before he set it down with the dishes.

"Bah, what hogwash," he growled out, "to set before a gentleman!" Then he took another generous gulp, perhaps to wash down the effects of the first.

"Well, what are you standin' there for like a wooden Indian. I got everything, ain't I?" going back to look at the tray to see if he had missed something.

"Yes, you forgot this," said the Detective, pushing forward the shining barrel of a pistol in the man's face. "This is something not included in the bill of fare."

CHAPTER XI.

PENDRICK TAKES A PARTNER.

"Sit down, Bucky, and enjoy your meal. You must be hungry after your exertions," said the Detective, blandly.

The big fellow stood staring at him, but made no move to accept the invitation. He had been taken so completely by surprise, that he recognized it was now to late to attempt to get rid of his unwelcome visitor.

"Sit down. Don't look as if you would like to eat me," smiled Pendrick. "I'm a tough morsel, and you'll find that supper much more to your taste and not as indigestible."

"Who are you? I don't know you," grumbled the man.

"Then you have a short memory, Bucky. Take another look," and the Detective stepped forward nearer the table where the candlelight could fall on his face.

"Well, if it ain't——"

"Just so. I thought you'd recognize me. Never mind those things you've hidden away in the fireplace," as the man cast a hurried glance in that direction. "They're as safe there as anywhere."

"Good Lord! you know everything," grumbled the big fellow, drearily. "But what can you want o' me?" dropping into a chair with an air of resignation.

"A good deal, or I should not have taken so much trouble to find you."

"Well, let's have it."

"How is it that you are free? You had at least a year more to serve?"

"I helped a guard, when a prisoner came near escapin', and was pardoned," replied the giant, meekly.

"Hum! That may be true. I'll look into it. When did you get out?"

"This mornin'."

"And started in at once as a collector of bric-a-brac, and jewelry, I see," smiled the Detective. "So much good your vacation did you."

"A man's got to live," grumbled the other.

"Well, I'm not at all sure that he has," replied Pendrick, shaking his head. "Bucky, I've no idea of being hard on you, though I'm grieved to see that you have fallen into evil ways again. I've been watching you for an hour or more, and was an interested spectator of your performance in getting into that house. Now, here," and he took the silver jewel case out of his pocket and held it up in the light, "here is a little thing you dropped in your flight."

"I did miss that, when I got here. An' it was you that picked it up?"

"As you see. It unfortunately for you fell into my hands. In any others it might not have mattered so much. This particular article you would have done well to get rid of, because it happens to be on the list of things stolen from the Marchands house on Fifth avenue, some months ago."

"Ah, I could have had no hand in that. Sure, I was safe enough when that took place."

"No doubt but it might have hurt you if it had been traced to your possession. You stole it from the original thief, is that it?"

"Oh, he's thief enough and worse, but it might be that he got it in the way o' trade," replied Bucky, who, having now resigned himself to the situation, felt more at ease and even ventured to snatch a bite of something to eat from the table, and a furtive drink from the bottle.

"You know this man whose house you looted tonight?" asked Pendrick.

"Know him!" and there was a world of eloquence and pent up passion in the two words. "Faith, there's no man knows him better nor worse than me, for that matter."

Here was just the fellow from whom he might get particulars regarding the baffling personality of the banker-doctor. That is, if he could persuade Bucky to speak.

"It was him that was the means o' gettin' me inter trouble," continued Bucky, fiercely. "It's a way he has, the devil, to sacrifice some 'un to save his own neck. Now, in this business that sent me down the pike, I was as innercent as you are. I'd made up me mind that I was tired o' bein' crooked and told this man so. He laughed at the idee of me tryin' to live honest. He made up his mind that he'd make it so I never could climb up or break away from the business. So he got me pinched for this affair that I was not mixed up in. It was a punishment, ye see, him arguin', I guess, that when I got free I'd been thrown back on him again. Well, he was dead wrong, for I had plenty of time to think when I was up the river, and I figgered up that as I hadn't made crooked work pay, I'd try bein' honest as soon as I got free. I was strong and ought to be able to make an honest livin'."

"But your good resolutions broke down as soon as you were free of the prison," said the Detective, holding up the silver case, suggestively.

"Not a bit of it," replied Bucky, complacently, as he helped himself to a pickle. "This business ternight was more out o' revenge than anything else. He owed me money, and had done me a dirty trick, so when I see him this mornin' in the street and recognized him, while I felt like punchin' his head I knew that would on'y get me in trouble and not fill my stummick, while if I plundered him I'd be revenged on him and make it pay, as well." He did not mention then, his interview with the artist.

"Oh, that was the way of it, eh?"

"Yes, an' I don't back out of me wish to be honest, if I can on'y git half a chance."

The Detective looked at his earnest, rugged face for a moment, and it was not a bad face for all the ragged whiskers gave it a certain fierce expression, and Pendrick held out his hand.

"Bucky, if you'll stick to that I'll help you. I guess if you'll figure up your profits of thieveing you'll find, weighing the risks and discomforts, that even as a common worker around the docks you would have a balance in your favor, not counting the content and piece of mind that a crook can never know."

The big fellow looked at the extended hand for a moment doubtfully, and his face softened as after a moment's hesitation he took the little Detective's hand in his and pressed it.

"It's mighty much easier to get down than it is to get up," he remarked, after a pause, and with a furtive glance towards the chimney where he had hidden the plunder, "With no 'un to give ye a help up."

"Here's a man that will," said Pendrick.

"What, you?" staring at him in astonishment.

"Exactly. Unless all your promises of reform are a blind."

"Oh, I'm sincere enough."

"Then will you take service with me. I can't promise you much pay, but it will serve as a stepping stone to something better. Just now I have need of you. The man whose house you visited tonight interests me."

"Sure, it'll be a fine change for me to do some o' the huntin' an' not be always the hare!" said the fellow, his rough face lighting up with a grin. "I'll work fer ye, Mr. Pendrick, and mebbe a long-geared chap like me could turn a trick where a little man would be on the outs."

"Good!" and they shook hands on the bargain. "But remember no tricks!" said the Detective, warningly. Though he felt that this man was now sincere, he was not sure that he would be able to stand all tests when he was thrown with his former companions.

"Remember that if you play me false I have a long arm though I am so little," said the Detective, good naturedly. "No double dealing, and I'll make a man of you yet. Now, then, I'll pay you forty dollars a month to begin, and here is ten in advance so that you can buy yourself a few clothes," and the Detective took a roll of notes out of his pocket, found the bill he wanted and laid it on the table.

Bucky looked at the money a moment and then slipped it in among his rags.

"You'll get your money's worth," he said. "But them things?" suddenly turning with a troubled face towards the fireplace.

Pendrick laughed. "Ho, you don't like the idea of giving them up, eh? You don't want to start on the right road loaded with plunder do you? That would never do at all."

"But it seems a pity to——"

"Don't worry about those things, my friend, just put them out of your mind. I'll take care of them and I'll see that they don't get back to the man you took them from. The goods were probably all stollen, in the first place, so I'll take charge of them. They shall be returned to Police Headquarters anonymously, for just now I don't want the people down there to know where I got them. I dare say claimants will soon appear for the goods."

"Oh, yes, I guess so," replied Bucky, in rather a disgruntled voice, as Pendrick went over to the fireplace, took off the blower, and picked out the various things that had been hidden there.

"Well, you were not very particular about what you gathered in," said Pendrick, as he unearthed a celluloid hand glass of the value of about half a dollar.

But the plunder made up in quantity what it lacked in quality, and it was a matter of wonder to the Detective how the man had been able to get away with such a burden. There were, however, some pieces of jewelry and articles of gold and silver in the collection. The Detective helped himself to a pillow case from the bed and tossed the things into it, twisting the end of the bag into a hard knot.

"Now, we have that off our mind, we can start with a clean slate," said Pendrick, as he resumed his seat. He could not help but notice that Mr. Bucky felt a little bad over losing the fruits of his night's work, but after a time he seemed to recover his spirits.

"If it was more out of revenge than for any reason that you helped yourself to this man's property, or rather the things he had stolen from others, why you'll have all you want before I'm through with him," said Pendrick.

"It would be doin' sassiety a service if you was to put him out o' business for good," said Bucky, with great decision.

"Well, now what is his name?" asked the Detective.

"His name?" and the other scratched his touseled head with an air of perplexity.

"That's what I said. I mean his real name."

"What his real name is I don't know any more than the ghost of me gran'father. I think he had as many as the sands of the sea and took any that might come handy. To us fellers that done business with him he was nicknamed "The Mouser," from the sly way he had o' turnin' up among us when we never expected him and disappearin' as mysteriously. Faith, ye'll have the time of yer life tryin' to trap that cat, I'm tellin' ye that knows."

"All the more reason for wanting him," said Pendrick. "Now do you think that you could introduce me to him? I mean as a worthy recruit."

"Eh, what, after me visit to him this blessed night?"

"Why not? If you pretend to be still willing to work for him I guess he won't refuse you. A man as skillful as you are and as strong is not to be found every day. As for your breaking into his house, well, it will disarm his suspicions if you face him."

"I had hoped I'd never have nothin' more to do with him," shaking his head, "for I tell ye he's the head of 'em all and the willest willian in the whole jing bang. He has a way wid him I think if he had a chance to say his say he could persuade an archbishop to steal a pocketbook. Oh, ye don't know the man."

"No, and that's why I want to meet him. You can manage it easy. You can introduce me as an acquaintance you made in prison."

He did not think it necessary to take the man into his confidence regarding the discovery he had made that night.

"I don't like it. I don't like it a bit," said Bucky, shaking his head vigorously. "Faith, he knows ye well. Didn't I hear him often mention ye. Sure, more'n once when you came near nosin' him out, he detached a man to put ye out o' the way. Oh, he'd see through ye in a moment, and then goodby to you and me forever and ever!" and he shivered as if a cold draught of air was blowing about him, while he looked timidly towards the door and the fireplace as if he half expected the man he was speaking about to suddenly appear before him.

Pendrick, to tell the truth, was a little moved himself, by the man's emotion, though he took good care not to show it.

"Still it is necessary that I should meet this man and you must help me. You know where he is to be found?"

"Ye—es. Though he comes and goes as onsartin' as a will o' the wisp. We may have the luck, I mane the bad luck, to see him at the Coal Hole."

"What's that?"

"Never heard of it? No, an' small blame to ye. And are ye set on meetin' the old willain?"

"I am."

Bucky sighed.

"Then I suppose, I'll have to take ye, but it's at yer own risk, and that's no small thing. But he'll know ye! Yes, if ye was to change yer skin an' grow a foot."

"Come, come, your terror of this man carries you too far. When shall we start for this place?"

"As soon as ye please. But its on'y a chance, mind ye."

"Tomorrow night, then. I will meet you here," and Mr. Bucky suggested twelve o'clock as being the proper hour to visit the Coal Hole.

"Good," said the Detective, as he shouldered the load of plunder and with a warning to Bucky to behave himself, slipped out of the room and made his way noiselessly down the stairs. Wouldn't it be embarrassing if he was to meet with a green cop who should insist on examining the contents of the pillow case? He laughed at the idea, it would, however, call for a lot of explaining and just now he was not willing to explain.

It was now about two o'clock in the morning, and the streets seemed deserted. He regretted that the white bag made him a conspicuous object and likely to attract the attention of any wandering thief. Already he fancied he saw certain sinister looking shadows moving about in the distance.

It was while he paused to speculate whether he should advance towards them, or choose another route, that a vigorous push from behind sent him sprawling and the bag was tossed with its jingling contents some distance ahead.

Before he could scramble to his feet, some dark object flashed past him, the white bag was whisked up from the pavement and disappeared in a twinkling around the corner.

CHAPTER XII.

AN OPEN ENEMY.

Pendrick made no attempt to regain the property that had been wrested from him, perhaps because he thought it was not worth while, and he was already very weary and sore and bruised from the nasty fall he had just had.

It seemed to him a peculiar incident that for the third time that night the plunder should have changed hands. The powers that prey were evidently given to preying on each other when they had an oportunity.

Pendrick felt that he had spent altogether a profitable night, and not the least of his achievements was having won over Bucky as an ally. But could he trust the man? He knew that even the most hardened criminals sometimes had periodic attacks of virtue and that they did not last very long. But he was pleased to think that the big, good-natured fellow might prove an exception, and that he was not morally beyond hope, if only given half a chance to rise. What Pendrick feared most was that a man of his impetuous nature might plunder at the wrong moment and wreck his own plans beyond redemption.

It must not be thought that Pendrick had lost sight of the elevator murder, as the newspapers were pleased to designate that tragedy. He had a theory that the Doctor of the many names and habitations had something to do with that. Time would show if he was right or wrong. In the meantime, he was not going to stop pursuit of a man with such a varied and interesting personality.

For some months past, what the press called a "Saturnalia of Sin" or a Carnival of Crime" had reigned throughout the city. This was rather strong language, hardly backed up by facts; but certainly there had been a number of robberies and murders and the police had been unable to find the guilty, though of course they were always about to make wholesale arrests which never came off.

Sam Pendrick had been struck with the ingenuity with which these outrages had been carried out, as if they had been planned by a man of unusual talent. He was not the only one to think that there might exist in the city a society of accomplished malefactors banded together with a man of brains at the head, like George Leonidas Leslie, who flourished in the last quarter of the last century.

Now that Pendrick was in war-harness again, he thought the ambition of his life would be fulfilled if he succeeded in breaking up this criminal conspiracy, if it existed.

The Detective was reading the morning papers about ten o'clock the following morning. There was much about the murder in the elevator and for the first time mention was made of a certain Manuel Menendez, a supposed lover of the victim, who could not be found. His reading was interrupted by a sharp ring, which brought him to the peephole.

It took a great deal to fluster him, but the gasp he uttered must have reached the ears of the gentleman standing without. Pendrick even fancied that the visitor chuckled as if he appreciated the effect he had produced.

"Speaking of devils," he muttered.

The first caller of the day was none other than the benevolent-looking and soft-voiced Doctor Mordecai! No wonder that the Detective was astonished to find the man he had decided was an enemy storming his outposts.

"Ah, Mr. Pendrick, I am delighted to see you at home," said Doctor Mordecai, with a low bow and a quick look at the Detective through his gold-rimmed glasses.

He was dressed in black with a rich simplicity, and would have admirably played the part of the "Uncle" who dispenses blessings and wealth in the last act of a drama.

"You don't know my name. It's Mordecai," the visitor hastened to say and helped himself to a chair without being asked. "I recognized you last night in the hall of the house where that unfortunate woman was murdered. I live there, just under the young artist, who seems to be wanted by the police, and——"

"Whom you helped to escape!" broke in the Detective, unable to conceal his suspicions. Did this old humbug think that he could brave Sam Pendrick to his face with impunity.

"You were saying——?" and the amiable Doctor's grey eyebrows went up a little.

"You heard exactly what I said," returned the Detective, testily. "You helped that young man out of the house, disguised as your brown servant. I found that out later."

"Indeed! This is very interesting," replied Mordecai, sucking the end of his gold-headed cane and certainly the most composed of the two. "But why bother about Renwood, as you will see by the papers. There is another man, one Menendez——"

But Pendrick was not to be switched off the track.

"Yes. After you had gone I discovered that the real servant had been left at home," lashed into fury by the other's composure and letting out much more than he intended to.

"Oh, you saw Shelim's brother, I presume. Yes, he is staying with us for a few days, until I can find him something to do."

Pendrick saw that he must go more cautiously, He had himself prepared this mild-looking gentleman with an answer.

"So you thought I had been conniving at the escape of this unfortunate young man, Renwood?" and Doctor Mordecai laughed softly. "Oh, well, you detectives look at things in a different light from we men of peace. I attempt to shield a murderer! Why, the idea is preposterous. I am something of a philanthropist, but I don't carry my benefactions as far as that. Now, if you have any dark suspicions that I have any interest in protecting the murderer of that poor young woman, I will tell you that I came here, if possible, to engage your services to find the criminal."

"I am engaged already," said the Detective, sullenly. The amazing impudence of this man overwhelmed him, and for once he hardly knew what course he should pursue towards his visitor. He knew that he was getting exasperated, and losing his head in the presence of this unctious individual, but the temptation to touch him on the raw was too great to be resisted. He was not going to let Mordecai carry away the idea that he was fooled.

"I'm sorry, for I should be glad to pay a round sum to see justice done the memory of this unfortunate young woman."

"I suppose that your friend Godfrey, the banker, is interested with you in this benevolent purpose?" said Pendrick, quickly.

This time Doctor Mordecai did start out of his usual calm. But it was only for a moment.

"Well, you are a sharp file," he said with a smile. "Oh, I might have told you my connection with that house, and indirectly saved you perhaps some trouble. You see, I was a silent partner of Godfrey's and when he died I carried on the business under his name. I'm known in the neighborhood as Godfrey."

Really the fellow was prepared at all points against attack. Nothing, it seemed, Pendrick could say, could trip him up, and he himself, was only showing the man that he suspected him, had been shadowing him. He had given away his own game without seeing a single one of his opponent's cards, and this knowledge did not add to his good nature.

He felt a fresh anger against the man when the latter rose prepared to go without ever having given him a chance to strike him in a vulnerable spot.

"I am sorry that we can't do business together," said the Doctor, blandly, "but since you are engaged on this work, it will amount to the same thing. I thank you for a very pleasant visit," and with this Doctor Mordecai bowed politely and went out, while poor Pendrick, with his hand on the door knob, stood glaring after him, unable to deliver a parting shot apropos to the moment.

As the shining silk hat disappeared down the stairs he slammed the door violently to, shaking his fist savagely in the direction the gentleman in black had taken.

"The old rogue," he muttered, "he knew quite well when he saw me up at the flats that it must be the business of this murder that brought me there! His visit was just to show me how little he cared for me, and to find out if he could just how much I suspected him. Well, if he want's war he shall have it and to the bitter end," and the little detective raged up and down the narrow limits of his office unable to take a calm view of this man's defiance.

"He thinks himself stronger than I am, and laughs at me," he fumed, "at me, Sam Pendrick! Well, we can't meet too soon! Perhaps tonight, if Bucky keeps his word, and all is well. It'll be a duel to the death between us and I'll cut the comb of that old cock yet!"

Before, he had thought some of the risk of meeting such a cunning rogue at close quarters, of enlisting in his services if it could be managed, but what was the danger to him now?

This wretch had plainly thrown down the gauntlet of defiance, virtually scorned him. Well, time would tell, and now he was all eagerness for the time to come when he was to seek the rendezvous with Bucky. Here was a forman worthy of his steel, perhaps his match in cunning and strategy. Well, let the best man win, for his part, he was ready and eager for the play to begin!

This highly fascinating story will be continued in next week's Ledger, developing a most extraordinary interest. Any new subscriber or any one renewing a subscription is entitled to the Ledger free cameras and patterns as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

His Choice.

There was nothing wild in the caller's manner, so the lady at the employment bureau desk was rather startled when he told his wants.

"I will engage a cook," he observed.

"Fancy or plain?" she said.

"Plain—homely as sin," he replied. "In fact, I don't care whether she can cook or not. Any old thing that looks like a cook will do."

"Really, I——"

"And if she drinks, smokes or steals silver, so much the better."

"Goodness me! what——"

"I specially desire that she be very strong and in the habit of beating her employer with a club."

"Upon my word!"

"In short, I want a rampant, athletic, rip-roaring terror, and I can promise good wages."

The lady at the desk was begging central to connect her with the police department."

"Hold on!" explained the caller. "Allow me to say that the domestic I seek will be in the employ of my wife's mother."—Judge.

Old Eckersal's Deputy.

(Continued from page three.)

Gerow's cabin," observed the Sheriff. "What business had you with me?"

"Nita is my daughter. I was coming here to prove my identity and take her away with me. She is not of age and I have rights in the matter."

This exceedingly graphic and interesting story of the West will be more fully developed in chapters that will appear in next week's Ledger. It will repay you splendidly to read the story to the close. How does your subscription stand? Has it expired? If so, we strongly urge you to renew it at once and keep the Ledger, with its great stories and interesting miscellany, in your home. For the benefit of the boys and girls we are giving away hundreds of our King Cameras free, and ladies surely ought to take advantage of our free patterns. Just look at our advertisements of these premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen and see if you do not wish to subscribe and secure them. A good time always to do a good thing is Today, so do not delay sending in your subscription.

"NO TROUBLE"

To Change from Coffee to Postum.

"Postum has done a world of good for me," writes an Ills. man.

"I had indigestion nearly all my life but never dreamed coffee was the cause of my trouble until last Spring I got so bad I was in misery all the time.

"A coffee drinker for 30 years, it irritated my stomach and nerves, yet I was just crazy for it. After drinking it with my meals, I would leave the table, go out and lose my meal and the coffee too. Then I'd be as hungry as ever.

"A friend advised me to quit coffee and use Postum—said it cured him. Since taking his advice I retain my food and get all the good out of it, and don't have those awful hungry spells.

"I changed from coffee to Postum without any trouble whatever, felt better from the first day I drank it. I am well now and give the credit to Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Happy Courtships

The fact that some lovers are able to attain the ideal of happiness during their period of courtship is a constant source of wonder to those couples whose course of love is considerably disturbed by differences and quarrels which seem to arise in spite of their endeavors to avoid contentious matters. The secret of courtship happiness, however, is a very simple one. It lies in the two words mutual forbearance, which it is necessary to practice both before and after marriage, if true happiness is desired.

It is a rather curious fact that lovers find it extremely difficult to overlook each other's little failings. Jane views with alarm Harry's tendency toward unpunctuality; his fondness for smoking, sport, athletics, and male society, and last, but not least, his disposition to please himself and have his own way. And her alarm is increased when busybody friends hint that such characteristics spell disaster after marriage. Consequently, Jane ventures to reprove Harry, and this wilful lover resents her lectures, and possibly proceeds to point out certain failings in herself. The result, of course, is a quarrel and disagreement which is repeated as the one's failings clash with the pleasures of the other.

If, however, Jane exercised a little tact and common sense, shut her eyes to outside talk, and endeavored to find an excuse for Harry's little faults, she would be surprised to find how quickly her lover would recognize her tolerance, and endeavor that she should have no cause to complain on the ground of selfish or inconsiderate conduct.

Men are not so thoughtless as the majority of people would have us believe, and the girl who shows forbearance towards a lover who exhibits little traits which do not exactly please her, is generally sure to find that he loves her the more for so doing, and is careful that he on his part does not complain or grumble when his sweetheart runs counter to his desires.

It is easier to overlook each other's failings when the fact is pointed out that they often spring from an excess of affection; and even where there are real faults, that love is not worth much which cannot forgive them.

A Terrible Strike.

"Poor man," said the sympathetic lady as she handed out a piece of pie and several doughnuts, "you look as if you had undergone some terrible experience. What is the cause of your present deplorable condition?"

"A strike, ma'am."

"Ah, those terrible strikes! Who can estimate the amount of misery that they cause? It is awful. The Government ought to do something to stop them. I am in favor of having the troops called out whenever one of them happens. What right have we to call this a free country while such things go on? I suppose you had taken some striker's place and were trying to earn an honest living for your wife and little ones when you were set upon. Poor man! Never mind. I'll see if I can't get my husband to find a job for you and——"

"No, lady, it wasn't dat kind of a strike. I was sleepin' under a tree when de lightnin' struck it and a limb fell on me. T'anks. Could you let me have one more of dem sinkers?"

Once, it is said, there was a princess from whose mouth a pearl fell every time she spoke. Of course the story is untrue. This fact is proved by the scarcity of pearls.

A WINNING START

A Perfectly Digested Breakfast Makes Nerve Force for the Day.

Everything goes wrong if the breakfast lies in your stomach like a mud pie. What you eat does harm if you can't digest it—it turns to poison.

A bright lady teacher found this to be true, even on an ordinary light breakfast of eggs and toast. She says:

"Two years ago I contracted a very annoying form of indigestion. My stomach was in such condition that a simple breakfast of fruit, toast and egg gave me great distress.

"I was slow to believe that trouble could come from such a simple diet, but finally had to give it up, and found a great change upon a cup of hot Postum and Grape-Nuts with cream, for my morning meal. For more than a year I have held to this course and have not suffered except when injudiciously varying my diet.

"I have been a teacher for several years and find that my easily digested breakfast means a saving of nervous force for the entire day. My gain of ten pounds in weight also causes me to want to testify to the value of Grape-Nuts.

"Grape-Nuts holds first rank at our table."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason." Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Much Relieved.

Mrs. Society—Mercy on me! Don't you know that man your daughter is going to marry?

Mr. Meek—No-o. I've been afraid to ask her.

Mrs. Society—He's a prize-fighter, a regular tough. He's fought a score of men and half killed a dozen women.

Mr. Meek (much relieved)—Oh! Then he's all right. I was afraid he was some poor lamb like myself.

Can't Always Tell.

Gyer—Bonem doesn't look like a man who would strike another when he's down, does he?

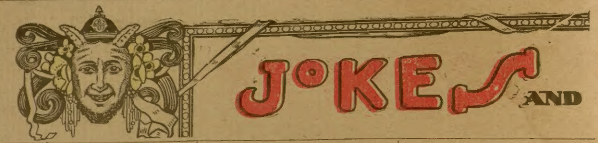
Myer—I should say not.

Gyer—Well, that's the kind of chap he is. He struck me for $5 while I was lying on the sofa the other evening."

No Choice.

She—There's Mrs. de Smythe. I wonder how she and her husband first met.

He—I've always understood they didn't meet. She overtook him.



How He Could Tell.

A student greatly annoyed the professor of natural sciences by asking frequent and foolish questions.

One day, after he had interrupted the professor with irrelevant remarks and questions, he asked:

"Professor, how long can an animal live without brains?"

"Well," was the professor's reply, "I really don't know, Mr. Blank. How old are you?"

Why She Left Him.

New Yorker—Is that story about a Kansas City bride eloping with a miserable, dirty Digger Indian true?

Kansas City Man—Yes. She left her husband within a week, and is now living with savages.

How is it accounted for?

Well, I don't know, of course; but my opinion is that the white husband snored. Indians never do.

Real Polite.

A cabman was driving a very stout old lady one day and had some difficulty in getting her in and out.

"I'm afraid I'm a bother to you," said she as he was helping her out.

"Not a bit," answered cabby, meaning to be gallant. "I likes a fare what steadies the cab."

Sure Thing.

Stranger—Excuse me, but what's the quickest way to get to the hospital?

Native—See that automobile coming down the street?

Stranger—Yes.

Native—Well, just step in front of it!"

How to Shop.

Fair Shopper (in great store)—There, this novel will do. Don't wrap it up.

Clerk—Don't wrap it up?

No, indeed. I'll sit down here and read it to kill time while waiting for my change.

Too Ancient.

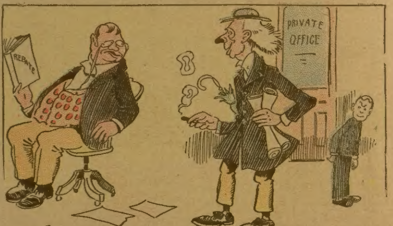
Roxey—I hear that De Barnes has given up his intended tour through Egypt?

Rowland—Yes, he has just read that some eggs 3,000 years old have been dug up over there.

Taking Up the Fad.

Ida—Mrs. De Swelle doesn't take much interest in the tennis courts since she was admitted to the New York 150.

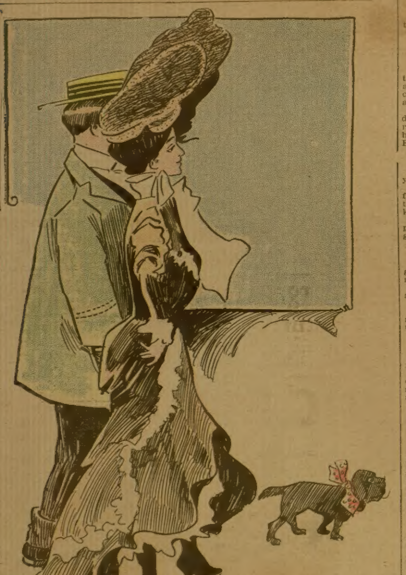
May—No, she is more interested in the divorce courts now.



The Inventor—I have an invention that, I think, will interest you.

Railroad President—What is it?

The Inventor—A machine that will break five times as many trunks as a baggage-master and in less time.



He—Why do girls wear engagement rings?

She—On the same principle that a person ties a string around his finger—so they won't forget they're engaged.

Mean Man.

"So the burglar that paid your home a visit the other night wasn't a 'gentleman burglar'?" said Mrs. A.

"I—I should say not," pouted Mrs. Z.

"He took all of your money?"

"Y-yes."

"And all of your jewels?"

"Y-yes. B-but I could have stood all of that, but for one thing."

"And what was that, my dear?"

"He—he said the baby was homely."

Sympathy.

Mrs. Highup—Such shocking stories as the paper do tell. I read to-day of a mother around the corner who tried to kill her children because she could not get them anything to eat."

Mrs. Higherup—Cruel creature! Well, I don't know, though. I really believe I would rather etherize poor little Fido than see him hungry. Marie, go see if you can't coax Fido to eat a little more of that tenderloin.

Conquered.

She (after a lovers' quarrel)—I suppose you want your presents back?

He—Ah, no; keep them. If any of the fellows ask about the presents, I'll explain that they were fully paid for in hugs and kisses.

She (on second thought)—My dear, suppose we forget we have quarreled and begin over again.

True Prophecy.

Soubrette—Do you remember the tall tragedian? Well, he said some day he would move the audience.

Comedian—Yes, and now he's moving an audience every night."

Soubrette—You don't mean it?

Comedian—Sure! He is selling peanuts and popcorn and every time he comes down the aisle the audience has to get up.

Wise Sherlock.

The modern Sherlock was called upon to fathom the great art robbery.

"Fudge!" exclaimed Sherlock, after a careful examination of the gallery. "I'll stake a gold certificate against a stogie that a tramp committed this deed."

"Why so?" we ventured, in awe.

"Because he took every picture except the one entitled "The Bath."

Not Eligible.

Kind Lady—My poor man, when the last tramp called here I gave him a bar of soap. He cut it open and found a note inside with an offer of marriage from a pretty factory girl."

Gritty George (hastily)—No use to tell me dat, mum; I expect to remain a bachelor the rest of my days."

Not the Right Sort.

Papa—No, he's not the proper sort of a husband for you, my dear.

Daughter—Oh, papa, he'd go and die for me!

Papa—Oh, that's all right; tell him to go as far as he likes. I feared he wanted to marry you.

A Sad Calamity.

Small Clerk—Och, fadder, dat gun vat you sole Meester Schmallwitz last week bursted de virst dime he vire it off, an' killed him det.

Preprietor—Mine gracious! Dat vas awvul! I sold him dot goon on drust.

The Things We Eat.

Too much meat is absolutely hurtful to the body. Sailors on board of ships get scurvy when their supply of vegetable food is exhausted. The digestive organs of the human body demand vegetable food and if we don't eat enough vegetables we pay for it dearly.

Nature gave us wheat and in every kernel of wheat nature has distributed iron, starch, phosphorus, lime, sugar, salt and other elements necessary to make bone, blood and muscle.

EGG-O-SEE is wheat—scientifically prepared. Cooked and made into crisp flakes EGG-O-SEE goes into the stomach ready for the digestive organs to convert it into life-giving substance with but little effort.

EGG-O-SEE eaters are a clean-eyed, strong and happy lot. The proof of a pudding and the proof of EGG-O-SEE is in the eating. EGG-O-SEE besides being solid nourishment is most palatable. Every mouthful is a joy to the taste and direct benefit to your health. A 10-cent package of EGG-O-SEE contains ten liberal breakfasts. Our friends advertise us. They eat EGG-O-SEE for awhile. They grow strong. They are well and happy and they pass the good word along.

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You try EGG-O-SEE and you can deduct the cost from your doctor's bills.

We send our book—"Back to Nature" free. It's a good book—full of plain, good, common sense. If you want a copy, address EGG-O-SEE CO., 13 Main Street, Quincy, Ill.

Realistic.

The book agent was showing the old farmer one of the "six best sellers."

"A wonderful book," said the agent, as he turned to the first chapter. "Just listen to this plot: 'There's an ominous cloud on the sire's brow when he sees the lightning flash in the determined eyes of his beautiful daughter.' "

"Great shoats," ejaculated the old farmer, his jaw dropping.

"Then comes the shower of tears. 'But hark! The hero is thundering——' "

The old farmer jumped down from the fence and held up his hand.

"One minute mister, he drawled. "One minute till I put the chickens up and get my umbrella. I swan, that thar book is so stormy I feel like I am getting wet now."

She Knew.

"Katharine," said Bob, as he brought his club chums down to the depot platform, "these are all my friends."

"Glad to meet you, gentlemen," replied the bride, sweetly, "and I am so sorry that you are going to be sick."

"Sick?" echoed the crowd in astonishment. "Why should you think we are going to be sick?"

"Oh, because soon after the honeymoon a married man always finds a great many sick friends to sit up with."

Feminine Erudition.

"Is Miss Wiggins remarkably well informed?"

"I shouldn't say so," answered Miss Cayenne. "She can tell all about Huxley and Darwin, but she never knows where the real bargains are to be had."

JOLLITY

Their Sad Fate.

Naggus—What are you going to do with the hero and heroine of that magazine story you're running now? Marry them?

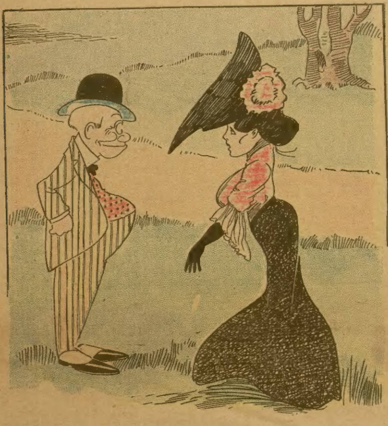
Borus—Certainly. They'll be married in the last chapter.

Naggus—I'm glad of it. It will serve them right.

Mental Effect.

"It is stated," we observed to the bald-headed man, "that the hair of mental workers falls out sooner than that of men in other lines of endeavor. Is your profession one of great mental effort?"

"It certainly is," he replied. "I compose the glowing advertisements of hair tonics."



She—I suppose you think you see deception written on my face.
He—No, but I see it painted there.

Cheap Doctoring.

Anxious Mamma—Little Dick is upstairs crying with the toothache.

Practical Papa—Take him around to the dentist's.

I haven't any money.

You won't need any money. The toothache will stop before you get there.

Love in Chicago.

Mr. Lakeside (Chicago)—Has your son gone to his club again?

Mrs. Lakeside—Probably not. He put two pistols in his pockets before starting. He is probably going to propose to a girl.

Thinks She Could Stand the Pressure.

Invention Enthusiast—I have learned that a Philadelphia scientist has constructed a cylinder that will stand a pressure of three thousand five hundred pounds to the square inch.

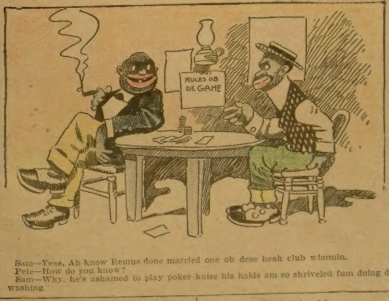
Pretty Girl (who hasn't been hugged for a year)—Huh! I don't think that's much.

Blessings of Poverty.

Jinks—Do you suppose a man with a family can live on a dollar a day and be a Christian?

Blinks—Of course. He can't afford to be anything else.

AT THE BLUE DICE CLUB.



Sam—Yeas. Ah know Remus done married one ob dese heah club wimmin.
Pete—How do you know?
Sam—Why, he's ashamed to play poker kaise his haids am so shriveled fum doing de washing.'

That Bearish Feeling.

"How are you feeling this spring, Mr. Bear?"

Mr. Bear—in hollow tree—Simply awful. I ate a Welsh rabbit last fall, and it kept me awake all winter.

A Feminine Job.

Cholly—Pushing sort of fellah, that. He has been twying to cultivate my society lately——

Miss Knox—How thoughtful of him! A little cultivation wouldn't hurt you a bit.

Pathos in a Name.

A speaker at one of the sessions of the Philadelphia Methodist Conference tells this story, which he says was related to him by Bishop Hartsell:

"The Bishop while on a Southern tour, met a darky who was the father of sixteen children, the youngest of whom was scarcely out of arms. On asking him what the youngster's name was, he received this reply: 'Judas 'Scariot, sah.'

"'You don't mean to tell me that that is really his baptismal name, do you?' asked the Bishop.

"'Indeed, I do, sah; ain't dat a Script'ral name?'

"'Yes; but do you know who Judas Iscariot was?'

"''Course I does, sah; but doan de Scripture say it would have been better for Judas 'Scariot if he had never been borned?'

"'Yes; but what has that to do with this poor little chap?'

"'Dat's jest it, sah; dat's jest it; it would have better for dis poor little chap if he had never been borned, and dat's why we calls him Judas 'Scariot.'"

The Destructive Bump.

Phrenologist—Your bump of destructiveness is very large. Are you a soldier or a pugilist?

Subject—Neither. I'm a furniture mover!

"Johnnie, your mother tells me that you are developing an ear for music."

"Yes, mum; but this ain't it. I got this in a fight."

He—They say a man is always nervous when he proposes.

She—And a gurrl is always nervous when 'e doesn't.

Foot Notes.

"What the public wants is high art," said the theatrical manager, as he engaged the six-foot damsel who could kick over the top of her head.

"I always did enjoy an intellectual feast," said the cannibal as he swallowed the university man.

"There are no flies on me," remarked the fly-paper in midwinter.

"Do you tumble?" queried the irate father, as he kicked the would-be son-in-law down stairs.

A Mother's Clear Eye.

Miss De Pink—Oh, mother, that reminds me. The other day I was riding in the cars when that wrinkled old lady came in, and it's a fact that Mr. De Smart, who didn't know me at the time, and didn't even see me, jumped right up and offered the old lady a seat. Wasn't that noble?

Mrs. De Pink (serenely)—He did not know you at that time, but I happen to be aware that he has long known the old lady. She is the grandmother of one of the prettiest and richest girls in the city.

Swelling Craniums.

There was a lull during the graduating exercises, and from different sections of the hall there came a serious of mysterious sounds.

"What in the world is that noise?" gasped the old lady in the front seat.

"Don't be alarmed, madam," assured the professor. "That noise is made by the bursting heads of some of the graduates."

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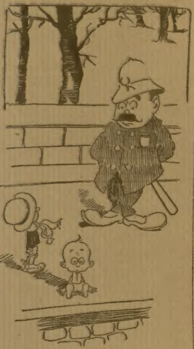

"Say officer, you're a servant of the public, ain't you? Well, I'm one of the public, so I wanter get you to mind the kid for me awhile!"

About the Limit.

Jim—Gruet is terribly absentminded.

Jack—I should say so. I've known him to telephone to his office and ask if he was in.

He—When I grow up I am going to command. I'm going to be a captain.

She—So am I going to command. I am going to marry.

Father—What have you there, Tommy?

Tommy—Apple pips.

Father—What are you going to do with them?

Tommy—I'm going to get the black hen to get on them and hatch some apples.

A TANGLE OF FATE;

OR,

The Triumph of Justice.

By M. H. FREDERICK.

Begun in No. 31, Aug. 4. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

"Harry," said Hugh Barton, as they waited in the courtroom while the preliminary work of impaneling a jury was going on, "you have a hidden enemy who is trying to ruin you. This cunning foe, or somebody for him, fired the shot which gave our courageous detective the scare of his life. I don't believe there was the faintest notion of doing the man harm; it was all a sham, a vile plot to turn public sentiment against you by making it appear that some friend of yours wished to keep Mulligan from testifying against you. Now, that's too thin even for the silly public not to see through if they'd stop and think; for all that Mulligan knows can be proved by other witnesses. I'm going to bring you out of this in ship shape."

"I don't doubt that your are right about my foe," replied Harry; "he keeps dealing me blow after blow while he stays behind a curtain of mystery."

"He may allow his clever mask to fall; if he does not we may outwit him."

"I can trust you to do your part."

"I shall do my very best. I believe I possess the intuition which a detective should have, and I have already drawn some conclusions, but I shall keep them to myself until I find that they are backed up by the facts. Now, you are going to tell the whole truth relative to why you were in the neighborhood of Mr. Scott's store at about the time of the fire, are you not?"

"I don't intend to tell anybody why I was there."

"You had better tell."

"I will not."

At this juncture the barrister's attention was claimed by other matters and he said no more to his client.

Mr. Scott had secured the services of two able lawyers, who, together with the district attorney, were the prosecuting attorneys. Hugh Barton alone represented the defendant.

Within a short time a jury was accepted both by the prosecution and the defense and the trial was ready to begin.

Just before the witnesses were called Ethel Scott came into the courtroom with Dick Willoughby. At sight of the couple Harry turned even paler than he had been before; but he was more completely bewildered than before when Ethel came quietly to his side and shyly, but with the tenderest, queenliest grace in the world, shook his hand. Harry thought of what he had been told about the probability of Ethel's marriage with Willoughby; but now he almost believed beyond a doubt that she was still true to him. He was so engaged with his thoughts that he did not observe that Ethel was sworn and that she passed into the witness room with the other witnesses.

The judge sat with his brow puckered into a frown and the corners of his mouth drawn down in almost comic severity, peering over his gold-rimmed glasses, and all was very quiet in the courtroom as Mr. Scott took the witness stand. The witness told the story of the fire and of how Harry had been trailed to his room by bloodhounds.

In cross-examination Mr. Barton asked:

"What is your state of feelings toward the prisoner at the bar?"

"We are not on the best of terms, but I am not maliciously inclined toward him," was the reply.

"How long has there been any unpleasantness between you and the accused?"

"We quarreled a few days before my store was burned. According to my understanding, he threatened me indirectly."

"What did he say?"

"I believe his words were that he was as good at desperate measures as I was."

"Very well," said Barton, disappointed that the witness had taken an unexpected turn. "Mr. Scott, tell the jury more explicitly about the location of the store which was burned. How far was it from your dwelling, and how were the windows secured?"

"We object," said one of the prosecuting attorneys; "that has nothing to do with the case."

"Objection overruled," was the court's decision.

"The store was a considerable distance from my dwelling, I can't say just exactly how far, and the window sashes were fastened on the inside."

"I think you stated that the fire had gained considerable headway when you discovered it?"

"Yes; it would have been useless to have attempted to save the store."

"Were the flames coming through the roof when you first saw the fire?"

"Yes. A portion of the central part of the roof was burned away or had fallen in."

"Were the flames coming out at the windows at the same time?"

"I don't believe they were at first."

Mr. Scott was excused and John Mulligan was placed upon the witness stand. He corroborated what Mr. Scott had stated about how Harry had been trailed by the bloodhounds.

Dick Willoughby was called and testified that a short time before the fire he was in Mr. Scott's store and saw Harry Reed near the store. Then he stated that he was in the room in Mr. Scott's residence which he usually occupied when he first saw the light from the burning building. He had hastened to inform Mr. Scott that the store was on fire. The rest of his testimony simply agreed with the testimony of Messrs. Scott and Mulligan. The prosecuting attorneys, by a few shrewd questions, brought out such points as seemed to strengthen the case against the accused. Then the witness was turned over to the counsel for the defense.

"Mr. Willoughby, you say you were in Mr. Scott's store just before it was burned?" asked Mr. Barton.

"Yes," replied the witness, moving uneasily in his seat.

"What was your business there at that time?"

"I was Mr. Scott's clerk and I had been posting up some books."

"And, I believe, while you were in the store, according to your statement, you saw the prisoner here near the store. Can you state how long that was before the fire was discovered?"

"Not positively."

"Well about how long do you judge that it was?"

"Ahem! I—it was not very long."

"Do you think it was half an hour?"

Here the prosecution offered an objection, but it was overruled.

"It was not more than a quarter of an hour."

"Are you positive that the man whom you saw was Harry Reed?"

"I am very sure it was."

"And yet you could have been mistaken?"

"I—I hardly think so."

"It was night, was it not?"

"Yes, but the moon was shining."

"What is your state of feeling toward the defendant?"

Willoughby cleared his throat and paused awkwardly.

"I—er—I'm not very well acquainted with him."

"But you have stated that you knew him by moonlight. Answer my question: Are your feelings toward him good or bad?"

"Well, they're neither very good nor very bad," answered the witness with a show of anger.

The resourceful young lawyer, by his rapid and skillful questioning, had caught Willoughby off his guard; the man's mask was off and he showed signs of uneasiness. He looked at his inquisitor squintingly, often allowing his eyes to drop to the floor. He seemed to be extremely nervous.

"You have stated," continued Mr. Barton, quickly following the advantage which he had gained and thus allowing the man no time in which to weigh his statements, "that you were in your room in Mr. Scott's residence when you first saw the light of the burning store. How long had you been in your room when you discovered the light?"

"I object," said the district attorney.

The court sustained the objection.

Hugh Barton had half expected this, and he was not taken aback in the least by the objection. The point he had been driving at was the visible effect which the question would have upon the witness. The result fully met his expectations. Willoughby quailed before the keen, searching eye of the lawyer; his face grew livid; a look like that of a hunted animal came into his eyes.

"After you first saw the defendant near the store, how long did you remain in the store?"

"Only a very short time."

"Can't you be more explicit and tell us about how many minutes?"

The witness seemed greatly relieved; again Barton had him off his guard.

"It was not more than ten minutes," came the answer.

"During that ten minutes did you see anything more of Harry Reed?"

"No; I did not think anything more about seeing him then."

"The windows of the store were securely fastened on the inside when you left the store, were they not?"

"I do not know; but it was usual for them to be fastened on the inside at night."

"Do you know that any of them were not fastened on this particular night?"

"No, sir."

"When you left the store, did you notice anything wrong?"

The witness changed color again, bent forward to spit, patted his foot, and then leaned back weakly as if the pressure of the crowded courtroom was too much for him.

"I—I didn't see anything wrong," he stammered.

"It wasn't long after that when you and Mr. Scott discovered the fire, was it?"

"No, sir."

"When you first saw the fire, were the flames coming out through the windows?"

"I can't say for sure."

"What do you think about it?"

"I don't believe they were."

"Were they coming out through the roof?"

"I believe so; I didn't notice very closely."

"When you saw the defendant near the store, before the fire, what was he doing?"

"He was walking past the store."

"Do you know where he went?"

"I suppose he hid himself near the store."

"We don't want any of your wild suppositions. Answer my question and confine yourself to facts."

"I don't know where he went."

"According to your own testimony, you were at the store about ten minutes after you saw the defendant pass it—do I state it truly?"

The witness started and the hunted look came into his eyes again. Did the lawyer mean to accuse him of burning the store? It looked very much like it. If a look could have killed, the evil light which flashed from Willoughby's eyes would have been fatal to Barton.

"Answer my question," said Barton.

"You state it truly," grudgingly replied the witness.

"Don't you think the fire had been raging five minutes or longer when you first discovered it?"

"It must have been."

"Subtracting the ten minutes during which you remained in the store after seeing the defendant, from the fifteen which you estimate elapsed from the time when you saw the defendant until the fire was discovered, we have only five minutes from the time when you left the store until the fire was discovered, do we not?"

Willoughby was driven to the wall and unmasked. In the confused and evil-looking specimen of humanity, cowering like a whipped cur, it was hard to recognize the suave dandy who had stepped upon the witness stand a short time previous. To the cove's great relief he was excused.

Mrs. Scott testified briefly, corroborating parts of what the others had stated. Being cross-examined, she confirmed what her husband had stated relative to the flames coming out through the roof, but not through the windows of the store.

This completed the case for the commonwealth and the court adjourned until the afternoon.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the afternoon Harry took the witness stand in his own behalf. He admitted that he had been in the vicinity of Mr. Scott's store when it was burned, but declared his innocence coolly and unflinchingly. His manner and statements were straightforward and convincing. The silence of the courtroom was oppressive; the jury, from the white-haired member to the slender boyish-looking foreman, sat regarding the defendant like so many statues. The nerves of all who were in the courtroom were at a high tension. The peculiarity of the case excited great interest on all sides. Those who had come to hear the trial were anxious to discover how it was going to result.

The most sensational point which had yet been reached in the trial was when Harry was asked to explain what he was doing in the vicinity of Mr. Scott's store at the time of the fire and he remained stubbornly silent. The question was repeated but the defendant paid no heed to it whatever.

"You had better answer," advised the judge, "it may hurt you with the jury if you do not."

But still Harry did not offer a single word in reply.

Various whispered comments were exchanged in the courtroom. Why did the defendant refuse to tell why he happened to be near the store when it was burned? Why, unless it was because he was guilty of the charge which was preferred against him? For what other reason could he have been there than to fire the store?

That the chances thus far of his being acquitted were very slight, there could be no mistake.

When Harry left the witness stand, almost everybody in the courtroom, including the defendant, believed that the trial was finished, so far as the hearing of testimony was concerned. Therefore the case, which had been sensational from the first, reached its climax when Ethel Scott was unexpectedly called to the stand to testify for the defense.

The crowd near the bar involuntarily surged forward, and the judge was obliged to take decisive steps to restore order. The dozen men who had crowded inside the bar moved out promptly when the judge threatened to fine anybody who failed to do so.

When Ethel first found herself before so many prying eyes she experienced a thrill of maidenly embarrassment; for an instant the blood rushed to her temples, the room seemed to be very small and the faces around her seemed to be wild and distorted and they seemed unpleasantly near, but gradually she grew calm and self-possessed. A look of determination came into her face and the throng who stared at her so rudely seemed as nothing to her in comparison to her purpose to meet bravely the duty which a strange tangle of fate had placed upon her.

"Miss Scott, tell the jury what you know in connection with the burning of your father's store and the guilt or innocence of the defendant, Harry Reed," said the counsel for the defense.

"I know very little about the burning of the store," the fair witness began in a clear voice. "I saw the light of the fire from my room, but my window did not afford a view of the store. But I know that Harry Reed is not guilty of firing the store."

"Tell the jury fully what you know, Miss Scott."

"A short time before the burning of the store I promised to marry Mr. Reed. He asked my father's permission, but father objected for what doubtless he believed to be a good cause and forbade me to communicate with Mr. Reed. After my father forbade Harry the house we planned to elope. Father must have heard me tell my mother of my intention.

"On the night when the store was burned I met Harry in the garden and we planned to elope at once. I returned to my room to get some articles I wanted, leaving Mr. Reed waiting in the orchard near the house and promising to return quickly. When I reached my room and looked out of the window I saw him standing in the moonlight where I had left him. I had secured the articles for which I had returned to my room and stepped into the hallway, when I caught a glimpse of my father. I did not think he had seen me, and I glided noiselessly back into my room. But I must have been mistaken in thinking he had not seen me, for he evidently observed that I was dressed to go out. I went to the window and saw Mr. Reed standing patiently where I had left him. I was about to turn to the door again when I heard the key turn in the lock, and I knew that father had suspected my intention and had made me a prisoner for the time.

"I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to call to Harry and explain to him what had happened for fear that there would be trouble between him and father if father knew he was in the orchard. I sat down at the window to write a note to Harry to explain the new turn affairs had taken.

"Harry had not moved from his place, and soon I saw him glance anxiously toward the house. Having finished writing the note, I tied it to a bit of wood and threw it out of the open window almost to his feet. I saw him pick up the note and try to decipher it in the moonlight. I thought of the possibility of descending from a second-story window, for I was angry at the thought of being caged like a bird, but I shrank from the thought as I looked over the window sill. I wondered at the brightness of the moonlight; then I realized that the light was growing brighter still, and I saw Harry stop looking at my note and stare around him as if in surprise.

"The light outside increased to a glare and I heard somebody about the house cry out that the store was on fire. That is about all that I know that is of any importance, I believe."

It was now clear to the jury and to all who heard Ethel Scott's story why Harry had refused to tell what had caused him to be in the vicinity of the store on the fatal night of the fire, and he was greatly admired for his noble and unselfish effort to shield the fair name of a woman, even though it might cost him his liberty. His course was considered unwise, but he was conceded to be a magnanimous fellow who was too brave to shield himself at the expense of a woman.

Hugh Barton had suspected that Harry had been near the store to see Ethel, and he had made her acquaintance and learned from her what she testified in court.

"What did the defendant do when he discovered that the store was burning?" Barton asked when the witness had finished her story on the witness stand.

"He seemed to be greatly surprised at first. Then, when father and the other members of our household were out in front of the house giving their attention to the fire, he came a little nearer and we talked over the situation. I believe his first remark to me was that he ought to help put out the fire, but he saw that it would be useless to try.

"We agreed to postpone our elopement, or rather I persuaded him to do so, for I feared that father would discover his presence if he made any attempt to free me from my confinement, and trouble would result. When the glare of the fire was beginning to die away Harry set out for home."

Cross-examination brought out little that the fair witness had not stated already.

"Now, Miss Scott," asked the district attorney, "don't you think the defendant could have set fire to the store during one of the intervals between the times when you looked from your window and saw him. Such a thing was possible, was it not?"

"No. He was not out of my sight for some time before the fire long enough to have gone to the store and back."

"Mr. Reed, take the stand [illegible] Hugh Barton when Miss Scott's testimony was completed.

"Do you agree with the testimony of the last witness?"

"Miss Scott has stated the matter fully and truthfully."

"Why did you not give the full details of the case yourself?"

"I did not intend to have Miss Scott's name connected with the affair."

The district attorney and the counsel for the defense argued the case before the jury. The latter, with masterly eloquence and merciless power, defended his client and placed Dick Willoughby and the part he had played in the trial in a most unenviable light. He emphasized the point that the flames had first burst through the roof of the store, and claimed that, therefore, the windows being fastened on the inside, the building could not have been fired from the outside.

The jury was instructed and almost immediately rendered a verdict of not guilty.

A majority of the fickle-minded people who had been so ready to condemn Harry were now equally as willing to rejoice at his vindication.

CHAPTER IX.

Although Harry was now free in part from the tangle in which he had been involved, he was still mystified because of his father's prolonged absence. The mystery of the forged check still baffled him.

Mr. Scott still held himself aloof from Harry and gave Ethel no chance to elope with him.

"If Harry's father had not turned out to be such an ungrateful wretch," said Ethel's father one day, "I might have consented to your marriage with the young man. But as it is the young man can never rise above the disgrace of the affair."

Ethel told her parent what she had heard Dick Willoughby say in regard to the letter which he had lost, and the reference he had made to the burning of the store.

"The fellow must know more about the burning of my store than he has told. I'm [illegible] I prosecuted Harry Reed, but I was [illegible] in believing him guilty," said Mr. Scott. "If Dick is keeping a secret I will find it out."

Ethel produced the letter which she had taken from Willoughby's notebook, as previously narrated, and gave it to her father. It ran as follows:

"Dear Friend:—I have just received a telegram which informs me that my brother, Stephen, is in a dying condition in the West, and I shall take the train tomorrow for the West. I hope, by having an operation performed upon my brother, to save his life, and in order to be prepared for any emergency which may arise I would like to take a considerable sum of money with me. Now, my financial affairs are so arranged that I have not much ready money, and if you will make me a loan of $1,000 for a month it will be a great favor and I will repay the money on my return. I shall be at the postoffice in the morning, and if you will be so kind as to come to the city early tomorrow and bring me the amount mentioned, you may command me at any time in the future. Please write if you cannot accommodate me.

I would not ask for so large a favor if it were not for the urgency of the occasion.

Your friend, Carlo Reed."

"The letter is dated one day earlier than the forged check which Dr. Reed presented at the bank," said Daniel Scott, partly to himself and partly to his daughter.

"Are you sure Dick Willoughby had this letter in his possession, Ethel?" he continued.

Ethel told him just how she had gained possession of the letter.

"The tangled state of affairs in which we all have been involved begins to unravel," said Mr. Scott. "I may have done Dr. Reed great wrong, but I shall wait until I see him to be sure. But I don't see how he can prove that he didn't forge that check, besides, he has not returned yet, and it has been more than two months. However, Willoughby knows more than he has divulged. We'll keep our own counsel, Ethel, and wait for something else to happen."

Something else happened very soon. That very day there was a ring at the doorbell and two gentlemen to see Mr. Scott were announced.

Mr. Scott's brow darkened slightly at sight of Harry Reed, but at sight of the young man's companion the frown passed like a tiny cloud on a bright summer day. The man was very pale and haggard and it took Mr. Scott a moment to realize that his friend, Doctor Reed, stood before him.

There was a pleasant look in Carlo Reed's eyes despite the wanness of his face, and Mr. Scott could not ignore the proffered hand of his erstwhile friend. A few remarks were exchanged and then Doctor Reed said:

"Daniel, I arrived home from the West yesterday, and I am prepared to repay you the money for which I am indebted to you. I am sorry that I was unable to return and repay you sooner. And Harry tells me that there was some misunderstanding about the matter, but I cannot make out what it can be."

"I did not receive the letter you wrote to me just before your departure for the West until today."

"But you sent me your check for $1,000."

"I didn't send you the check."

Dr. Reed looked his astonishment. Harry had decided not to tell his father more than that there had been some misunderstanding about the check.

"Then who sent me the check? I wrote to you for a loan of $1,000 and I received a check payable to me and bearing your signature in a plain envelope. There was not a word of explanation and I assumed that for some reason you could not come to the city as I requested and had decided to send me the check by mail," said the doctor. "I tried to call you up over the 'phone, but failed to get you."

"The check was a forgery," Mr. Scott replied, "and I have been foolish enough to [illegible] you of being the guilty party. Can you ever forgive me?"

"It was but natural. I profited by the forgery. Who else could you accuse? I don't see that there is anything to forgive."

"I was too precipitate in condemning an old friend."

"I freely forgive you, if there is anything to forgive. But who could have committed the forgery, and why did he do it?"

"That is what has been troubling me and what made me accuse you; but I think I can guess who is the culprit now."

"Whom do you suspect?"

"My clerk, Dick Willoughby. I have fairly good proof that he is the culprit. He usually attended to the mail and could have sent the forged check, and he could have intercepted your letter as well, without directing suspicion toward himself. In fact, I would not have suspected him at all, but I happened to get possession of your letter and to learn positively that it had been in his possession."

"I begin to see light through the mystery now. Willoughby had a grudge against me because I knocked him down once in a crowd because he talked very insolently to me, and he swore to be revenged."

"But what could have been his motive in forging the check when he did not profit by it?"

"Doubtless he meant to have it appear that I forged the check, and thus get me into trouble."

"That explains it all. But for the fact that he neglected to destroy your letter he might have succeeded in escaping suspicion, while it would have been difficult for you to establish your innocence."

"A plotting scoundrel, however clever, almost invariably fails to cover his wicked deeds completely. I believe that sound judgment and good sense are not characteristic of criminals, although some of their schemes are wonderfully planned."

Mr. Scott turned to Harry.

"Harry, I must beg your forgiveness. I am sorry for my rashness toward you. Will you shake hands?"

The young man took the other's hand. His was a nature which was not too mean and too narrow to forgive.

"I have done you both wrong," said Mr. Scott.

"We have all been the victims of a fatal tangle of circumstances and of a scheming, hidden enemy," said Harry.

"What of your brother?" asked Mr. Scott, turning to the doctor.

"I had an operation performed and I watched over him until all danger was past. He is convalescent and will come East soon. He has prospered immensely at the mines where an accident came so near costing him his life."

"You do not look well."

"I taxed my powers too severely watching over my brother and, in consequence, I have gone through a serious illness."

"That explains why no news came from [illegible], doesn't it?"

"Yes; I neglected to send any message to Harry or yourself previous to my illness and after that I could not."

Mr. Scott had Dick Willoughby arrested, and when the villain found that his duplicity was known he confessed that he had forged the check, for which he afterward received the penalty of the law.

Mr. Scott accused Willoughby, also, of setting fire to his store in order to throw suspicion on Harry Reed.

"No," the villain replied, "it was an accident. The gasoline lamp exploded and I took advantage of the circumstances to throw suspicion upon Reed, for reasons which I will not mention."

Willoughby had hoped to place a barrier between Harry and Ethel, hoping thus to manage to win the charming heiress for himself. This had been part of his motive in seeking to have Harry's father accused of forgery.

"Harry," said Mr. Scott a few days after Dr. Reed's return, "your words have come true: justice has triumphed and I am sorry for the injustice which I have done both you and your father. I was sincere, although I was woefully misguided."

"I am glad that everything has turned out right at last," returned Harry.

"Do you still want to marry Ethel? I forbade you to mention her to me again, but if she wishes to marry you I have no objection."

"I meant to mention the subject to you today. You make me very happy, sir."

A little later Harry found Ethel among the roses in the garden.

"We shall lose the romantic charm of an elopement," he said to her. "Your father has consented to our marriage at last."

"The trouble we have all had seems like a foolish dream," replied the maiden.

"I am glad that we have such a happy awakening."

The bee which was gathering honey from a flower nearby might have envied Harry the kiss which Ethel gave him, and the blind god of love, hidden among the roses, heard and chuckled with satisfaction as he turned away to seek elsewhere new victims for his honeyed darts.

The End.

Helpful Housecleaning Hints.

So many women cling to the old-fashioned system of sweeping the stairs down that the work of introducing modern ideas is dispiriting. If you will but once try sweeping them up you will never return to the old practice. Begin at the bottom, sweep the dust to the first step, then to the second, and so on. When you have reached the top you can easily sweep the dust down the hall, adding to it the sweepings from the bedrooms, and then throw it from a rear window.

Washing the windows is a task that is always dreaded and no wonder. Instead of pursuing the old practice of washing the windows while they are in the frames, wait for a blithe warm day, when all nature is in tune and the little birds are singing merrily in the treetops. Take the windows out and send them to a laundry that does flat work. If the laundryman is careful not to stretch them you will wonder why you ever persisted in washing them yourself, just because your folks did that way back home.

Do not use perfumed soap for housecleaning. You may think it scents the woodwork pleasantly, but when it is accidentally dropped into the soup it gives it an unpleasant flavor. Get a good clear soap, one that is flavored with beef extract, or cabbage, if possible. Then when it comes in contact with the cooking utensils or is inadvertently included in the hash you will not hear the rasping complaints that are too frequently the burden of the talk of the men during housecleaning days.

Why beat the rugs in the back yard? Simply because your mother had it done before you, and her mother followed the same plan. We are too hidebound in our allegiance to customs that prevailed in the old days. It is much easier to hang a rug over the piano or bookcase, or over a bedstead, beat the dust from it and then sweep the dust out with the rest of the stuff.

If, when washing the oil paintings the lye in the soap eats away the picture, do not be down-hearted. Get a few tubes of paint from the art store, take a brush and fill in the streaky places. There are times when this process really improves the picture. In the case of water colors, if the painting has been done with hard water you need have no fear that it will affiliate with soap. If soft water has been used in mixing the water colors you can detect it at once by the suds which will arise.—Omaha [illegible]

A Transmuted Hog.

The process of killing and dressing hogs has become a science in Chicago, and is thus described by an eye-witness.

We saw a piebald pig grunting and snorting in his pen, a quarreling member of a quarrelsome family. Now, what happened to that porker was this: He was suddenly seized by the hind leg and jerked upon a small crane. This swung him swiftly to the fatal door through which no pig ever returns. On the other side stood a man with a glittering knife in his hand. One plunge of the cruel weapon in his fair, fat neck, and the dead pig shot across a trough and through another doorway, and then there was a splash. He had fallen, head first into a vat of boiling water. Some unseen machinery passed him along swiftly to the other end of the terrible bath, and there a water-wheel picked him up and flung him out on a sloping counter. Here another machine seized him, and with one revolution scraped him as bald as a nut. And down the counter he went, losing his head as he slid past a man with a hatchet, and then, presto! he was up again by the heels. In one dreadful handful a man emptied him, and while another squirted him with fresh water, the pig—registering his own weight as he passed the teller's box—shot down a steel bar, from which he hung, and whirled around the corner into the ice-house. One long cut of a knife made two "sides of pork" out of that piebald pig. Two hacks of a hatchet brought away his backbone. And then in thirty-five seconds from his last grunt—dirty, hot-headed, noisy—the pig was hanging up in two pieces, cleaned, tranquiled, iced.

Think of it. That poor and most unfortunate porker, who, before he had quite made up his mind whether to resent the first liberty taken with his hind leg, was dead as a door-nail, and, half a minute later, was actually ready for the cook.

The Latest Arithmetic.

A tramp hires out to a farmer for $14 per month. He gets a boss dinner, works for an hour, and then skips out. Counting the dinner worth 30 cents, did he make or lose? Counting the three bites from the farmer's dog while making his skate at 20 cents a bite, was the dog, the farmer or the tramp ahead?

A father pays $250 to educate his daughter in music, $50 to enable her to say "good day" in French, $150 to give her painting and $100 to teach her how to dance. She then marries a young man getting a salary of $9 per week. How much will she save by doing her own kitchen work for the next five years, paying herself at the rate of $3 per week?

It takes twenty blows of a hammer in the hands of a woman to drive a 10-penny nail one inch and she misses the nail three times where she hits it once. In striking five hundred blows how far in is the nail driven and how far can she be heard when she strikes her thumb instead of the nail?

A railroad train is moving at the rate of two hundred feet a second. A deaf [illegible] who is jogging into town [illegible] more legal steps have been [illegible] the beef trust, is picked up [illegible] high that the train is out from und[illegible] before he comes down. How [illegible] hoisted?

Exactly.

Prisoner—But I would rather tell my own story. Don't you think it would be believed?

Lawyer—Yes; that's the trouble. It would carry conviction with it.

Porpoises on the French coast have almost ruined the sardine industry. To remedy this condition, the French Government has ordered the torpedo-boats to sea, to make war on the porpoise.

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CHAPTER IV.

LEE MEETS A STRANGER.

The small creek along which the old trapper and Lee intended to set the traps wound its way through the wooded hills a couple of miles from the lake. Here and there it dashed through narrow defiles to spread out further on into wide, shallow pools.

Along these, Reeder discovered many signs of mink and otter, and the traps they had brought with them were soon placed and set. When this was done, they took a little turn through the hills for the purpose of looking for some game

Reeder crossed the hill, going to the northwest, while Lee took up a position in a narrow valley lying between two hills. Here he was to wait till the old trapper had made a wide circuit and returned, for Reeder well knew that any deer that he might start from cover, would in all probability pass near the spot where Lee was to remain in waiting.

As soon as the old trapper had disappeared, Lee examined the caps in his box to make sure that they were dry and in good order, for in those days there were no water-proof cartridges such as are in use today.

Placing a fresh cap on his rifle, he took up his position behind a tree and waited.

Lee had never shot a deer, and the prospect of doing so now, filled him with nervous excitement. The day was fair and the dry leaves lay in heaps along the hollows rifted by the wind, and as now and then he would hear a rustle among them, he would expect momentarily to see a deer appear.

But, as the minutes passed and lengthened into an hour without bringing any sign of the expected deer, the feeling of excitement gradually wore off.

Growing weary of waiting, he presently seated himself on a rock at the foot of the tree, against which he had been standing, and just as he did this he heard a stir in the dry leaves just across the hollow.

In an instant he was up and on the alert, his rifle ready for instant use.

As he cast his eyes in the direction from whence the sound had proceeded, he could see nothing at first. But soon a form came into view, that of a man—a stranger to Lee.

He was a man of some thirty years, and he was walking rapidly, carrying something slung across his shoulder.

As he descended the slope his eyes fell on Lee, and at the instant his hand went to his belt, which contained a pair of heavy pistols.

Then as he took the second glance at the youth, he laughed a good-humored laugh as he greeted him.

"How do you do, youngster?" he said, in an easy manner. "When I first got a squint at you behind the tree I thought you might be a red skin and I was getting ready for business."

"And I thought at first when I heard you coming, that it was a deer," smiled Lee.

"Well, it seems that we were both mistaken," said the stranger, as he laid a roll of pelts he had been carrying, on the ground. "Do you live near here?

"I am out here for a season of trapping with some friends," Lee replied. "I live near Gray Rock."

"Ah, I see. You occupy a cabin over by the [illegible]

"Yes."

"Well, that's lucky. I was on my way over there to pay you a visit, and maybe I can arrange the business without going, for I wanted to ask a little favor of you or your friends. My name is Filley. Thomas Filley, and some friends of mine and I are here on a timber-hunting tour. I have had the good luck to bag a couple of otters and I want to express the pelts to a friend of mine in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and as we expect to be out on our exploring expedition for some time, these pelts are in the way, and I wanted to find out if any of your party intended going to town soon, and if so, I would be very glad, indeed, if you would execute a little commission for me."

"Why, certainly," replied Lee. "Mr. Reeder expects to return to town in two or three days to get some more traps, if that will be soon enough to suit you."

"That will be soon enough, to be sure. If you will take these pelts and have Mr. Reeder ship them for me, I will be very much obliged and shall pay you as well. You will see that they are done up all ready for shipment, with the shipping tag and everything all on. Please accept this for your trouble," he added, handing Lee a five-dollar gold piece.

"Why, I shouldn't think of wanting pay for it," said Lee, extending his hand and offering the money back.

"Oh, it is worth something, and I want to pay for it."

"But I don't want to accept this," persisted Lee, "and I am sure Mr. Reeder would not."

"Then you can use the money to prepay the express charges," said the stranger, "and if there is anything left you can keep it for your trouble in carrying the pelts to your cabin, which will be very poor compensation for the favor you will be doing me."

"Thank you," said Lee. "We shall be glad to oblige you."

"A thousand thanks. Here is my card, and if I can ever be of any service to you it will be a pleasure. Your name is——?"

Lee gave his name, as he took the card and read:

"Thomas Filley, Omaha, Nebraska."

"Now, Master Morgan," said the stranger, "I will have to be tramping back towards our camp, which is a mile or two west of here. If you happen out that way in the next day or so, come and see us. Let me thank you again for your kindness. I wish you plenty of good luck, and only wish I had the time to spend a month or two trapping and huntin'."

He shok hands with Lee and walked rapidly away in the direction from which he had come.

Lee seated himself and fell to watching for any deer that might pass down the dell. But after an hour's waiting Reeder returned, reporting that he had seen no game since they separated.

Lee told him of the visit of the stranger, and of the pelts to be shipped.

"He left a five-dollar gold piece to pay for our trouble," Lee said, "but when I refused to accept it he insisted on my keeping it to prepay express charges on the parcel, saying we might keep what was left for our trouble."

"Well, he must have been a perty clever feller," commented Reeder. "Of course, we wouldn't want pay for doin' a little favor like that, but we can use what is left to buy traps."

He bent over the bundle and examined the shipping tag. It read:

"John Simmonds, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas."

"Those are nice pelts for the time of the year," commented the old trapper, as he examined the parcel. "I shouldn't mind to bag some of this kind."

Reeder lighted his pipe, and declaring that he felt like taking a little rest, seated himself on the end of a log, letting his back rest against a tree.

"I find that I ain't as strong as I used to be," he declared. "I didn't think it anything to be on the tramp all day long when I was forty."

After a short rest the two set out on their return to the cabin, taking the nearest route across the ridge.

"I am glad we got on the ground early in the season," said Reeder, "for it will not only give us plenty of time to get things in order for the winter weather, but us bein' here will sorter keep out other trappers from this region. If we have anything like good luck, we'll have a power of skins before we pull out."

CHAPTER V.

SAM BEASLEY.

Ray Donaldson realized, as he saw the the boat containing the three boys approaching, that whatever he did must be done quickly. Seeing that reinforcements were close at hand, Carl redoubled his efforts to keep Ray under, but the lost strength of that youth was fast returning.

The boat had almost touched the shore, when, with a mighty effort, Ray was on his feet. Carl was still struggling desperately, but now a cry for help came from him as he felt the vice-like clutch of his antagonist.

The sight of the three hastening to the spot, roused all the flagging energy in Ray's being. It was like a tonic to him, and at that moment he felt all his strength come back to him. Just as Carl aimed a blow at the face of Ray, he felt an awful grip upon him; then Ray struck him a heavy blow with his open hand and he went down with a short gasp, and the next instant Ray caught him up, and with a mighty effort threw him head foremost into the lake.

He went down amid a circle of foaming bubbles, just as the boat struck the shore. While one of the boys hurried to the assistance of Carl, the other two leaped ashore and confronted Ray.

"What does this mean, you ruffian?" cried the foremost, a youth of eighteen or nineteen—a heavy-set fellow, who looked as if he might prove a tough customer in a rough and tumble battle.

"I will let those fellows explain, if they are able," replied Ray, quietly, nodding toward Carl, who was being lifted from the water, and then toward Frank Mitchell, who had now so far recovered as to be able to sit up and look about him in a bewildered manner.

Sam Beasley—for such was the heavy-set youth's name, surveyed Ray with an angry scowl, his hands working nervously.

"I shall make you tell me," he declared, but he did not appear to be anxious to carry his threat into execution, for he and his companions had witnessed both the combat with Frank and with Carl, and they had witnessed the latter's assault on Ray, with the heavy stick.

The neat manner in which this strange youth had disposed of Frank and Carl had filled the three with utter amazement, and even the muscular Sam Beasley, who prided himself on his superior strength, was so impressed [illegible] feared to match himself against Ray.

Ray's blood was up now, and he did not feel in the humor to bandy words with the newcomer.

"Give him a good licking, Sam!" spluttered Carl, as he was drawn from the water. "He tried to drown me, and I guess he's almost killed Frank."

"Yes, he caught me just when my foot slipped, or I would have fixed him," declared Frank, who was now able to get upon his feet, but showed no signs of renewing the combat. "Give him a good whipping, Sam, for he deserves it."

"I have a mind to thrash you within an inch of your life!" exclaimed Sam, taking a step toward Ray.

"Well, don't let us talk about it," replied Ray. "I am ready."

But Sam stopped, evidently fearing that his experience might be similar to that of Carl's and Frank's.

"I guess thar ain't none of the rest of them that want any of it!" chuckled a familiar voice, and Ray turned to see Reeder and Lee approaching rapidly. "We happened to see the whole transaction," went on Reeder, "an' I say that those two chaps got what they were sp'ilin' for."

"That's right," sanctioned Lee, "and if those other fellows want to take it up, I am ready to accommodate them, for I guess that Ray has done his part, already."

But Frank Mitchell and his friends, who had now collected in a little body to themselves, did not seem disposed to reopen hostilities, and after a short conference they moved in the direction of the boat.

"We shall see you again, and then we'll get even," declared Sam Beasley, shaking his fist at Ray. "Just remember that."

"There is no need to put it off," retorted Ray.

But to this they made no reply, but getting into the boat, the five rowed up the lake.

Ray and his friends walked in the direction of the cabin, and while Ray removed the marks of the conflict from his clothes, he related all that had occurred to bring on the trouble.

"So they [illegible]ate the cabin, did they?" smiled Reeder. "Why, blame their pictures, this cabin was built before they were born, an' they have no more right to it than we or any one else that might happen along. By George, it did me a good deal of good to see that bully, Frank Mitchell

A BOLD STEP.

To overcome the well-grounded and reasonable objections of the more intelligent to the use of secret, medicinal compounds, Dr. R. V. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., some time ago, decided to make a bold departure from the usual course pursued by the makers of put-up medicines for domestic use, and so has published broadcast and openly to the whole world, a full and complete list of all the ingredients entering into the composition of his widely celebrated medicines. Thus he has taken his numerous patrons and patients into his full confidence. Thus too he has absolutely and completely removed his medicines from among secret nostrums of doubtful merits, and made them *Remedies of Known Composition*.

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The *exact proportion* of the several ingredients used in these medicines, as well as the working formula and peculiar processes, apparatus and appliances employed in their manufacture, are withheld from publicity that Dr. Pierce's proprietary rights may not be infringed and trespassed upon by unprincipled imitators and those who may be piratically inclined.

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git what he needed. He's bin sp'llin' for it for a long time."

"I had to fight them both," said Ray, "and when Carl got a lick at me with that stick I thought they had me."

"It was a cowardly trick," cried Lee, "and I would have been mightily glad if I could have been here a few minutes sooner. But you gave them both all they could very well stand, and I rather think they'll not be so fresh next time."

"You can bet on that," nodded Reeder. "But it is just such chaps as that that might destroy our traps or commit some other devilment, so we must keep our eyes peeled for them."

"They might try to get possession of the cabin if they should happen this way when we were away," suggested Lee.

"Oh, I reckon they would hardly try that," said Reeder. "We have got possession, an' if they bothered our effects they'd lay themselves liable under the law."

"Why," exclaimed Ray, now for the first time noticing the parcel brought by his friends, "where did you get those otter skins?"

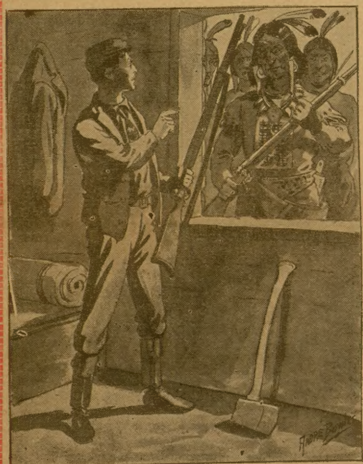
Lee explained, giving an account of his meeting with the stranger and of his request to have the skins shipped.

"They are beauties," remarked Ray. "I should feel proud, indeed, to capture a pair like these. Where were they caught?"

"He did not say," replied Lee.

"I reckon he never caught 'em himself," ventured Reeder. "He didn't look much like a trapper. He probably bought 'em of some one, an' wants to send 'em as a present to a friend."

Reeder and the boys spent the rest of the evening laying plans for their work and discussing the events of the day.



"Get away from here!" he cried.

The next morning, Ray and Reeder started to make the rounds of the traps, leaving Lee at the cabin.

"If Frank Mitchell and his friends come back to pay us their respects while we are gone," said Ray, "look out that they don't double team on you. They seem to be cowardly enough to do most anything.'

"I guess I'll not try to lick the whole crowd as you came pretty near doing," smiled Lee, "but I'll try and see to it that they don't get possession of the cabin."

CHAPTER VI.

OLD FRIENDS—UNEXPECTED VISITORS.

Left to himself, Lee Morgan went up the slope with an axe and began cutting wood and dragging it down to the cabin on a rude sled, to which he hitched the team they had brought with them to haul their effects.

About ten o'clock, having seen some wild geese settle in the lake near an island, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, he took his rifle, and getting into an old canoe that was moored near the cabin, he paddled out to the island, hoping to get a shot at the geese.

The island was some twenty or thirty rods long, by two-thirds that in width, and was covered with a thick growth of timber. Near the north end a chain of jagged rocks rose to a height of forty or fifty feet.

As Lee made his way through the interlacing foliage toward the other side of the island, he suddenly came into a dim path. This was a surprise to him, for he had not the faintest idea that the lonely bit of land lying out there in the lake had an inhabitant. But on examining the path closely, he came to the conclusion that it had been made by human feet, and he was quite sure that he could detect footprints recently made.

This raised his curiosity, and he was determined to investigate. The path must lead somewhere, so he set out following it, keeping a sharp look-out.

"It might be the rendezvous of some band of robbers," he thought, and he made his way cautiously, keeping on the alert.

The path led him northward, toward the rocky cliffs, and as he descended into a narrow pass between the towering cliffs, he stopped abruptly.

Not thirty yards ahead, in a diminutive canyon, nestled a log cabin, old and weather-beaten.

A thin column of smoke rose from the chimney and spread out among the rocky cliffs that towered above it, announcing that the lonely cabin had an occupant.

"Well, now, this beats me," ejaculated Lee. "Who would have thought that any one lived in this lonely place? Who can it be and what object could one have in living here?"

He walked toward the cabin, keeping a sharp look-out about him as he did so. The door stood ajar, and he could get a partial view of the interior.

He could see a few pieces of rude furniture in the room, and at the far end could see a man of middle age sitting before a fire that burned in the fireplace.

Lee, hardly knew whether to advance or retire quietly. It was hard to guess what manner of man the solitary inhabitant of the island might be. It was evident that in taking up his abode in such a place that it must have been from a desire to get away from the haunts of other men.

Lee was still debating the question as to whether he should present himself at the cabin when he heard a light step behind him. He turned quickly, and as he did so he saw a girl coming along the path carrying a pail of water.

She was scarcely fifteen, and wore a dark green frock and a red cap that sat jauntily on her head, a rebellious mass of curls of burnt gold, escaping from beneath.

Lee took off his cap and stepped aside to let her pass.

"I beg your pardon if I am intruding," he said. "I saw some wild geese settle east of the island and I came over to try to get a shot at them, and as I was crossing the island, I came to this path and followed it to this place."

"Oh, my father and I don't lay any claim to the island," she hastened to say, as she deposited the pail on the ground and stood looking at the youth.

"I didn't know we had neighbors so near," Lee said. "My name is Lee Morgan, and my friends and I are stopping in an old cabin on the shore of the lake, where we expect to spend most of the winter trapping."

The girl looked at him critically.

"Why, can it be possible that you are the Lee Morgan I used to know when I was five years old?" she exclaimed, coming nearer.

A sudden light came into Lee's eyes.

"Gee whiz!" he ejaculated. "It can't be that this is little Dessie Murphy that I used to play with when I lived in Missouri?"

"Why can't it?" she queried, her eyes shining. "I can remember a big burr-oak tree by Miller's ford and a boy that used to live just across the road."

"Why, it is Dessie!" he cried in delight, stepping forward and grasping her hand. "How glad I am to see you! But how you have grown since I last saw you."

"Of course I have grown," she said, "and so have you. I would hardly have known you if you had not spoken your name, but now I can see that you have not changed so much, except in size."

"You have changed some, but I think I should have known you after hearing you speak," replied Lee.

"Yes, I know I have changed somewhat," she remarked, with a laugh. "Most of the freckles are gone off my face, and I have quit playing in the dust."

"And I," smiled Lee, in return, "have lost the warts off my hands and have quit hunting birds' nests for little girls. How old we both seem to be getting. But it is jolly to meet you here, and to know that we shall have you for a neighbor. But, Dessie, how do you come to be here in this wild place and on this lonely little island?"

"My father can explain that better than I," she answered. "I know he will be glad to see you—for your father was one of the best friends we ever had, so you must come to the house with me."

Lee took up the bucket of water and followed her to the cabin.

"This is Lee Morgan, father," she said, as they entered.

Mr. Murphy looked at Lee with a quick, eager gaze.

"And is this Hiram Morgan's little shaver that used to be playing with you about the yard?" he asked. "Well, well! I can see that he is the son of his father, and I think I would have known him. Come here, my boy, and give me your hand," he added, holding out his hand to grasp that of Lee's. "I can't tell you how glad I am to see you. You must excuse me for not getting up, for the rheumatism has got into one of my legs and I don't move around much when I can help it. I suppose you are suprised to find Dessie and me here in this out-of-the-way place, but life brings many surprises. Are you living near here, now?"

"I am here with some friends, and we expect to spend most of the winter trapping and hunting. We live near Gray Rock, some twenty-five miles east of here."

"So you are going to stay for the winter? Well, that is, indeed, good news. We shall probably stay here for some time, and it will be good to know we have neighbors near by. But tell me, now are your father and mother?"

"My mother is quite well, I thank you, and so are the rest of the family, but you have not heard that my father died six months ago," he added, sadly.

"Your father dead! My dear boy, that is sad news, indeed. He was one of the best

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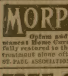

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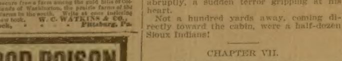

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friends I ever had. I shall never cease to cherish his memory. He was always generous and unselfish, and I heard that he met with some misfortunes in a financial way after he moved from Missouri, for he was always ready to go to the aid of a friend who was in financial straits."

"He did lose considerable through his association with some others in a mining enterprise," replied Lee.

"That is bad. I hope he left his family well provided for."

"We are fairly well situated. We have a good farm pretty well improved and some stock and a small savings in the bank, so we have no reason to complain."

"I am glad to hear it, my boy—glad, indeed. Is your brother Dan with you, here?"

"No, sir, he had to stay and look after the stock, he and my younger brother Phil."

"I hope you are having success trapping."

"We have just fairly begun. We put out a few traps yesterday and expect to put out many more during the next week."

"Some find it a very profitable business, but one needs experience, I suppose."

"We have an old and experienced trapper with us," replied Phil. "He has spent years at the business and knows the haunts of all kinds of animals. Do you trap any?"

Mr. Murphy smiled.

"I never set a trap for anything more than a rat or mouse," he answered. "Neither am I a hunter, yet I can imagine the charm in such pursuits. Under these circumstances I dare say you think it strange that I should be here, buried in the wilds of the wilderness, but we will leave that to another time. The matter that brings me here is a long story, and a strange one, you will admit, after you have heard it. You must run over and see us as often as you can. It is very lonesome here—especially so for Dessie, who has always been used to the companionship of youngsters of her own age."

"Well, I guess I am a little older than she," replied Lee, with a smile, "but maybe she won't object to that."

Dessie smiled and colored.

"I guess you have changed more than I thought," she said. "You didn't used to think it necessary to ask if you were too old to play with us. Is it because my freckles are gone?"

"I can't say that it is that exactly," laughed Lee. "Perhaps the loss of my warts has made me more thoughtful of the comfort of others."

So Lee and his newly found friends continued to talk for an hour, and then he rose to go.

"But you will stay and have dinner with us?" implored Dessie.

"Of course he will," broke in Mr. Murphy.

"Oh, I only wish I could," replied Lee, "but I have stayed now much longer than I should. I have quite forgotten all about the geese I came over to try to get a shot at, but I'll come again, you may be sure of that."

A few minutes later, Lee had pushed his canoe into the lake and was paddling toward the shore rapidly.

As he ran the canoe ashore and started in the direction of the cabin he stopped abruptly, a sudden terror gripping at his heart.

Not a hundred yards away, coming directly toward the cabin, were a half-dozen Sioux Indians!

CHAPTER VII.

TROUBLESOME VISITORS.

For an instant, Lee was undecided what was best to do—whether to conceal himself in the bushes that grew close at hand, or to run for the cabin.

But the thought that the red skins would probably plunder the cabin should he do so, made him act at once.

Clutching his rifle, he darted toward the house. In a few moments he had reached it, and unfastening the door with nervous fingers, he leaped inside and stood panting for breath, his heart beating tumultuously.

He had kept the cabin between himself and the Indians as he approached, and they had evidently not seen him. They were coming down the slope, walking slowly and looking neither to the right nor to the left.

Lee watched their approach with painful anxiety. He knew little of the Indian or of his ways, and he would have given a great deal to have known whether or not they were hostile Indians.

It is true he had seen many Indians since coming north, but they were of the half-civilized sort, and afforded poor subjects for the study of the real Indian.

Meantime, the Sioux were approaching the cabin. Lee closed and fastened the door and took his position by the little window, his rifle in hand.

That they might desire to plunder the place he had but little doubt, and it was his intention to defend it against such a raid, as far as he could.

Arriving at the door the Indians stopped and for some moments evidently holding a consultation, though Lee could not understand a word that was said.

Presently, the foremost advanced and tried the door, and finding it fastened, knocked on it with the butt of his gun, for each of the Indians carried a rifle.

Lee, who was watching behind the little hole of a window, now realized that it was time to do something, and mustering up his courage, he walked boldly to the window.

"What do you want?" he demanded, in as firm a voice as he could command.

"Sioux heap friend," said the foremost Indian, approaching the window. "We want come in, talk heap."

Now Lee had heard enough of Indians to know that one of their characteristics is to always profess friendship for the whites, no matter what their intentions might be, so he was resolved not to be caught by any protestations they might make.

"If you want to talk I am ready to listen," he said.

"Sioux heap walk. Want come in, rest and talk," replied the Indian.

"You can't come in," declared Lee. If you have anything to say you can say it where you are."

"Give um Sioux tobacco," grunted the Indian.

"I have no tobacco."

"Give um something to eat. Sioux heap hungry. He want in house, open door."

"I can't let you in here," said Lee, "but I don't mind giving you something to eat if you are hungry."

As he spoke he took a pan of bread and put it in the open window. In a moment it had disappeared, the leader dividing it up among the others.

"Now give um tobacco," demanded the spokesman, who was evidently a sort of chief.

"I told you I had no tobacco," replied Lee.

"Sioux heap friend. Give um tobacco," repeated the Chief.

"I can't help it, I have no tobacco."

"Kill um then!" grunted the savage, flourishing his rifle.

The words sent a chill of terror to the heart of Lee. There was now no mistake that the Indians meant mischief, and Lee was convinced that they would not hesitate to kill him.

He realized, however, that he must not allow the Indians to suspect that he had any fear of them. To do so would but increase the danger from them. Like the panther that hesitates to attack the human being that boldly faces it, the Indian is reluctant to attack a foe who has no fear of him.

Lee knew that his safety, and perhaps his life, depended on his keeping cool and showing a bold front.

Stepping to the window, rifle in hand, he stood ready to repel any attempt to force an entrance.

"Get away from here," he cried, "or some of you will get hurt!"

"Me heap good friend," said the Chief, changing his tone.

"Then get away from here and be quick about it," warned Lee. But despite his efforts to remain calm, there was a quaver of fear in his voice that he could not conceal.

The Indians doubtless detected this, for they immediately grew more bold.

One of them stepped to the door and began beating on it and pressing heavily aginst it with his shoulder.

A terror assailed Lee, and he stood back from the window, a sickening sense of fear rendering him powerless.

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HIS WATERLOO.

He manifestly was a book agent of the most calloused, determined-to-get-there type. Years of experience had made him indifferent to any rebuff that mortal man could inflict upon him. That morning he had been assisted down a flight of stairs without losing his serenity and self-poise.

Calmly confident of his prowess as one of the stars of his profession, he ascended a flight of steps leading to the door of one of a long row of brick tenement houses. He felt that his triumph was a "dead easy" one, when a small, rather alert looking woman, with her hair in curl papers and wearing a red calico "Mother Hubbard," one unlaced shoe and one slipper, opened the door and said with garrulous cordiality, "Why, good morning! Nice morning, isn't it? Come in, won't you?"

"Ah, thank you. If you will be so good as to spare me a few minutes of your time, I should like to——"

"Why, yes; I ain't much of anything to do. Got something to sell? You see, I ain't one that shuts the door in the faces of persons, even when I know they are agents, and you're an agent. La, I know the breed! I could tell you was an agent clare across the street. Books or furniture polish, or what?"

"I have, madam, a very unusual book to offer you, a book that——"

"Yes, I suppose so. It took fifty of the smartest men in the country to compile it, I reckon, and s'pose it's in sixteen volumes, one volume and $1 down, and the rest on weekly payments, and all that. But la, I never bought a book in my life! What's the good of buyin' books when all you've got to do is to go to the public liberry an' git any book you want for the askin'?

"I should think you book agents would git up some sort of a combine to make Carneggy quit flingin' his liberries 'round like he does. It must hurt your business a good deal; but then, as the old sayin' is, what's one man's meat is another man's pizen, an' I reckon liberries are well enough in their way, although I ain't much time or use for 'em. I don't know as I've read a book through in fifteen years. Life is short, an' if I——"

"This book I beg the privilege of showing you madam, is——"

"I ain't no doubt of it; but, as I say, if I want a book all I got to do is to scoot off to the public liberry an' git it, with nothing to pay; so what's the sense of puttin' good money into books? You know I've had some experience canvassin' my own self, an' I tell you book canvassin' is kind o' going by, what with all Andy Carneggy an' other multy-billionaires with uneasy consciences tryin' to git rid of money—what with them sprinklin' liberries around like as if they's come out of a waterin' pot. If a body must canvass they'd better try somethin' that's more of a universal need than books are at the present time; for—Say, you just wait. I want to show you somethin'!"

She darted into an inner room and returned with a bottle having a yellow wrapper.

"As I was saying, madam," began the agent, "this book I want to show you is——"

"Yes, I reckon it's all you claim for it; but I want to show you somethin' I'm puttin' on the market that's a good deal more of a universal need than books. Fact is, you need it yourself the worst way, for your hair is so thin on the top the scalp shows right through; and there ain't no earthly need of your bein' bald at your time of life. This remedy of mine is the greatest discovery of the age, and only one person in the world knows the secret of what's in it, and he learned it from the Injuns. Ever see a bald-headed Injun? Of course you never did? And why? Because they know things about preservin' the hair that ain't known to no other people in the world, an' this old Injun chief I'm speakin' of discovered his remedy in Mexico and gave the receipt to a white man who had saved his life. It's pure vege-tile, an' so harmless you might drink it if you'd a mind to. 'Scuse me, but I just want to feel your scalp."

"About this book I——"

"Yes, sir; it's just as I reckoned it was. Your scalp is real loose over the skull, an' when a human scalp is like that there ain't no need of bein' bald. Now, when the scalp is stretched tight over the skull an' has that shiny look it ain't much use to do anything with it, and yet this hair renewer I'm showin' you has worked wonders with even them kind of scalps, as you'll think when I've shown you some 'before usin'' an' 'after usin'' pictures I've got, an' they're not fake pictures, either.

"I can give you real names and addresses, an' I can take you to a lady right in this block whose hair has thickened up wonderful since she begun usin' this 'Hairena,' as it's called. I can show you a letter wrote by a man an' signed before a justice of the peace statin' how he was bald as an onion when he began usin' 'Hairena,' and now he's a fine head o' hair all over his head, an' I can——"

"I have so much ground to cover today that, really, I——"

"Well, don't you want to cover that bald spot with hair? It would improve your appearance mightily. Baldness is awful disfigurin', an' it's 'specially so in your case. You've got nice hair, an' it's a pity to go on losin it. One bottle of 'Hairena' would stop your fallin' hair, an' if two or three bottles didn't make your hair grow on your bald spot I'd refund the money, that is, if you used it accordin' to directions, an', as I say, it's the——"

"I really must be going; for——"

"Then, again, it ain't expensive like so many hair renewers not to be compared with this. It's only fifty cents a bottle, or three bottles for one dollar, an' you know that is far below the price of most hair renewers. I do want you to try a bottle for your own looks. A nice, bushy head of hair with a little kink in it like this produces would make a different lookin' man of you.

"I ain't one to flatter; but—you've no change but a five dollar bill? Oh, I can change that. So, you'll take a bottle? I'm so glad; for, as I say, you—shan't I wrap it up for you? I think you'll find the change just right. You'll find it will make a mighty difference in your hair. Good-bye. I hope you'll be real lucky with your books; but, as I say, Andy Carneggy an' others who—good-bye. I'd be pleased to have you write to me an' let me know how the 'Hairena' works on your head. My name is on the wrapper of the bottle in purple stamp. Good-bye, sir."

In England.

"I want a pair of gloves for my Jim," she said. "He's going to a ball."

"Yes, madam," said the assistant, producing the white kid gloves. "This is the kind, I suppose."

"Them!" cried the woman, "Goodness, no! They'd be too good. My Jim's got a hand like a shoulder of mutton. Besides, they're too dear. Haven't you got something like the policemen wear at about sixpence ha'penny?"

The assistant smilingly regretted that they did not keep that kind.

"Oh, well," she replied, "there's no 'elp for it—Jim'll have to wash his hands after all."

ROSES.

BY HOWARD SAXBY JR.

Roses, love, just roses,
  One—two—three—
No one, though, supposes
  What they mean to me,
Lily, lilac, lotus,
  Jasmine, heliotrope;
Pansy, poppy, primrose,
  Hawthorn, bud of Hope—
All these in our garden
  Find a spot to bloom,
Lending it their beauty
  Or their sweet perfume.
Still I think of roses,
  Yellow, red and white.
In them is reflected
  Something of the night
When a timid question,
  Braving fate, I ask,
(Why should I have dreaded
  Such a pleasant task?)
Something of the glory
  Of a silver moon
With the earth reclining
  In the arms of June;
Something of the candor
  In your guileless eyes—
Reflected there the color
  God gave summer skies
As you pluck the roses,
  Offer them and say:
"Thus my troth is plighted
  Ever and a day."

Roses, love, just roses,
  Withered, faded, dried—
When the album closes
  In its leaves they hide.

—Sunset.

The Test of Love.

Absence is an excellent test of love. Lovers would most indignantly repudiate that time or distance could dull the fire of their passion, but let them be parted, and see whether they can return to each other, after months spent in the midst of other interests, feeling that their bonds are absolutely as firm as before. Only the truest love, the love that belongs only to ardent temperaments, could be undimmed by a long spell of absence. It sounds somewhat unromantic, but how often have lovers themselves blessed the power of forgetting and loving again! In the agony of parting from each other they have sworn that nothing could ever come between them, that they will be true to each other forever, and they have not for a moment doubted their own strength. But the forlorn maiden left behind, aided by her relatives, and discreet admirers, begins to forget her sorrows. She takes up her life again, and finds it is not so clouded as she thought it would be, little kindnesses are offered her, and the absent "Jack" is no longer her one theme of conversation. His letters, too, have been growing less frequent, he is so "busy," and, after a time, with other interests more pressing in their claims, both these lovers begin to think their engagement was a mistake. Fortunate, indeed, is it when both are of one mind, and the "breaking off" is not a terrible wrench. After a mutual fading of their affection, this will mean relief to both, but, if absence has made the heart grow fonder on one side only, no pain could be more poignant than that suffered by the disappointed one. To wait day after day hiding her secret fears and longings for the letters that seldom come means anguish to the loving maid, and is there any more bitter experience than for the man who, having seen bigger opportunities far from home, and making there every strenuous endeavor to build up quickly the home his sweetheart has promised to share, learns that another has supplanted him in the love he believes his own?

Hung On to the Plow.

An old English gentleman, a school teacher, who some years ago resided in one of the small towns of Ohio, was an agreeable teller of stories, but deemed it beyond his reputation as a raconteur to tell one that did not surpass any that had preceded it.

A farmer having come to the village remarked in the presence of his friends that he had been plowing all week with four horses, breaking up new ground, and dwelt upon it as being a very big thing.

"Pshaw!" said the old Englishman, "that's nothing. I have seen in England fifty yoke of oxen hitched to one plow."

The remark seemed to occasion general surprise.

"And," continued he, "the funniest part of the whole thing was that while the plow was on the top of the hill the leading yoke of oxen was on top of another hill, and the forty-nine between the plow and the leaders were suspended between the two hills. And there was another matter connected with it rather strange. In the course of the day the plowman, becoming rather careless about driving his team, ran into and split a big oak stump. The plow passed safely through the split, but before the plowman got entirely through it closed up and caught him by the coat-tail."

"Did it tear his coat?" asked a person of inquiring turn.

"Not a bit of it," replied our veracious narrator; "he hung on to the plow handles and pulled out the stump."

She Knew That.

Mr. X wished to have a telephone put in his house, but his aged mother vigorously protested against it.

"Robert," she said, "if you bring one of those dreadful things here, I'll never close my eyes for fear it may break out and sweep us all into eternity, and us not a bit the wiser."

Mr. X tried to explain to her that it was a most harmless instrument, but she said, "No, no; look at the thousands, aye, millions, of poor Hindoos it killed last autumn."

"Why," he exclaimed, "that wasn't a telephone, mother; it was a typhoon."

But the timid old lady lowered her spectacles, and, looking at him over the rims thereof said:

"You need not try to make a fool of me, Robert. I perhaps don't know very much, but I do know that the typhoon is the Emperor of Japan."

Mr. X gave up the hopeless case.

Too many men spend their time trying to make molehills out of mountains.

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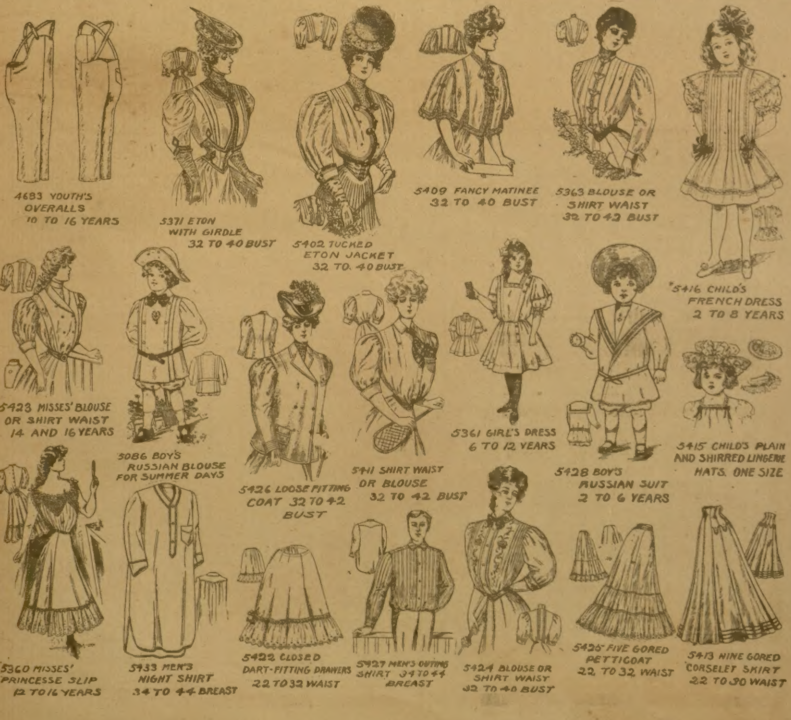
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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

KIDS.

I wonder why some Pas have none,
And others have so many.
It seems the poor Pas have the most
And rich ones haven't any.

The richest man I know in town
Has just one small boy only;
But Pa says, Gad! he pities him
In that big house so lonely.

It seems to me 'twould be so nice
If kids all come out even;
And when I ask Pa why they don't,
He said, "Be quiet, Stephen!"

Then fam'lies all'd have bills like Pa,
For us five kids together,
He says, would bust a cattle man,
We wear out so much leather.

But when the circus comes to town
Pa's glad he has so many,
For he has more fun takin' us
Than if he hadn't any.

My Pa says some day that he'll be
Too old to go on workin',
And then he hopes that none of us
Our duty will be shirkin'.

You bet we won't! We all love Pa,
But wouldn't it be funny
To have your father hanging 'round
And askin' you for money!

I've most a quarter in my bank
To buy a bullet-moulder,
But now I think I'll save it up
For Pa when he gets older.

—Selected.

Beneath Tons of Coal.

Madeline Mackerley, aged two years and seven months, disappeared from her home in Kansas City, Kas., one morning in April. Her mother was doing her own housework because of the sudden desertion of her maid of all work, and was in the kitchen.

Madeline was toddling around the house. She had a mania for climbing stairs and had climbed up and down the front stairs many times during the forenoon. The mother was preparing lunch for herself—her husband did not come home at noon—and she supposed that the baby was in the front room of the house.

It happened on that morning that James Mackerley, the head of the household, had ordered six tons of hard coal, having decided to lay in his supply for next winter and take no chances on increased prices on account of strikes or other happenings. The coal men arrived and Mrs. Mackerley opened the side basement door and admitted them, so that they could open the window of the coal bin and pour in the coal.

Mrs. Mackerley returned upstairs, the coal was deposited, the window and the door locked, and in a few minutes later she missed her baby. She called and hunted; then she went to neighbors, thinking that Madeline had escaped through the side door while the coal heavers were at work. She could find no trace of her child.

A night of anxiety and hysterics followed. The husband assured his wife that the child probably had been carried off and that an effort would be made to extort money from them for the return of the baby. His view was shared by the detectives who were called in to work on the case.

The night passed and the next morning dawned. It was a cold and dreary day, rainy and foggy. Mackerley remained at home, trying to console his wife, and waiting every minute expecting some news from the police who were working on the case. At 9 o'clock the house was so chilly that he decided to build a fire in the furnace. It was this decision that saved the life of his child.

No sooner had he plunged his shovel into the coal than he heard a feeble cry that seemed to come from under the coal. He stopped and listened. The cry was repeated. An instant later he was shoveling as if his life depended upon it. Within a few minutes he uncovered a small box, and inside of that box he found his little daughter, safe but hungry and scared. She had crawled into the box to hide from her mother, and had been buried under the coal.

All Night with Vicious Horse.

Jennie Golding, aged two years and four months, spent a night in the stall of a savage stallion which belonged to her father, Henry Golding, near Columbus Grove, Ohio, and escaped uninjured.

The stallion, which was an old one, had been notorious for years for the viciousness of its temper, and as it grew older it became more and more dangerous. The men who cared for it were forced to use pitchforks when they approached the beast, which would fight any living thing that came near it, and even try to break down its double stall doors to get at any human being.

This spring the temper of the animal became so bad that Golding had almost decided to kill it to prevent it from killing some one, yet he hated to destroy the animal, which was worth over $1,500 to him.

One afternoon in April Jennie Golding was missing from the farmhouse, which stood 150 yards up the lane from the barns. The day had been fair and warm and the baby had been playing in the gravel of the front walk. The mother at first thought that her husband had picked up the baby and taken it in the wagon with him when he drove over to feed some sheep in the hill pasture, so she did not worry until he came into the house for supper and brought no baby.

The alarm was raised at once and the father and the farm hands searched the barns, the dairy, the milk house, the corn cribs—every building on the farm. A small branch runs through the farm below the spring house, and the men waded through this, fearing the child had fallen into one of the pools and been drowned.

Day broke— and still no trace of the missing child could be found. It was planned that the men would search the oat, wheat, and bran bins as soon as daylight came, fearing the child had fallen into one of them—and perhaps been drawn down the bran chute and suffocated. James Stratton, the hired man, stopped to poke some hay into the stallion's stall and saw the strangest sight of his life. Little Jennie was asleep on a pile of hay in the stall, and the stallion, lying down, was perfectly still, as the child's head was on his neck and her chubby fingers wound into his mane. Stratton, by a quick dash, grabbed the child and escaped, while the stallion raged and fought. The child can now approach the stallion and it will come to the door and muzzle her while she strokes its head, yet its temper toward the men is worse than ever.

A TAIL TOLLED IN ENGLISH SPELLING.

A little buoy said, "Mother deer,
May Eye go out to play?
The son is bright the heir is clear;
Owe, mother don't say neigh!"

"Go fourth, my sun," the mother said,
The ant said: "Take your slay—
Your gneiss knew sled, awl painted red,
But do not lose your weigh."

"Ah, know," he cried, and sought the street,
With hart sew full of glee.
The wether changed, and snow and sleet
And reign fell steadily.

Threw snowdrifts grate, threw watery pool,
He flue with mite and mane.
Said he: "Though Eye would walk by rule,
Eye am not rite, 'tis plane.

"Eye'd like to meet sum kindly sole,
For hear gnu dangers weight,
And yonder stairs a treacherous whole—
Two sloe has been my gate.

"A peace of bred, a gneiss hot stake,
Eye'd chews if Eye were home.
This crewl fate my hart wood brake—
Eye love not thus to rome.

"Eye, week and pail, have mist my rode,"
But hear a carte came passed.
He and his sled were safely toad
Back to his home at last.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Little Elsie—What's a dead letter?

Little Mabel (who reads the comic papers)—It's one a woman gives to her husband to mail.

—

Father—What did the teacher think of the essay I helped you to write?

Johnny—She said I was getting stupider every day.

—

Myrtle's father was very homely and one day after looking at him steadily for some time she said: "Say, papa, was you the only man there was left when mamma got ready to marry?"

Wonderful Little Girl.

Little Daisy, who was only 4 years old, had a friend aged 8, whom she thought very wonderful. One day she was telling her mother, all about her.

"Just fink, mamma!" she said, "Margery can dress herself, an' button her own boots an' shoes, and bwush her hair, an' button little Teddie's clothes, an' hold tiny baby sister, and put on her own coat an' gaiters, an'—an' "—trying to think of still greater marvels—"I 'speet she could even spank herself an' save her mother the trouble, if she tried!"

THE SHEPHERD WIND.

The Wind, he is a Shepherd,
And every pleasant day
He drives his fleecy lambkins
Out in the sky to play.
They roam within a pasture
All beautiful and blue—
I'd like to be a shepherd,
And help to drive them too.

Fish Candles.

"Did you ever hear of fish being used as candles?" asks a writer in "Home Notes." "I daresay not; but they are so used, but in Alaska. In that country is found a kind of fish that makes a capital candle when it is dried. The tail of the fish is stuck into a crack of a wooden table to hold it upright, and its nose is lighted. It gives a good, steady light and considerable heat, and will burn for about three hours."

He Saved Him.

The Harlows were in poor circumstances. Mr. Harlow was a skilled artisan, but owing to the general depression in trade had lost his situation and he tried in vain to get another.

So that from a pretty and comfortable little house the family had been compelled to remove to a tiny cottage in one of the back streets of Blackburn, England. Most of their furniture had been sold to buy food, and their more fortunate friends had abandoned them.

Mr. and Mrs. Harlow had two children—Freddy, 5, and Arthur, 2 years of age.

Freddy was a bright, inteligent boy, and a favorite with all his playmates; while his baby brother, with his golden curls, bright blue eyes and dimpled cheeks, was the idol of the household.

One night, soon after Mr. Harlow had succeeded in getting temporary employment, a dreadful thing happened.

Mr. Harlow was on night duty and his wife had been called away to nurse her sister, who was very ill, so he was obliged to put the boys to bed himself before going out to work. Bidding them "go to sleep and be good boys," he left them in the house alone, though not without some misgiving.

When little Arthur had repeated his evening prayer to Freddy, and the latter had said his, and had asked God to make his dear Aunt Jane better, the little fellows dropped asleep locked in each other's arms.

About two hours later Freddy woke up gasping for breath. He rubbed his eyes and found that the room was full of smoke. Hastily scrambling out of bed, he ran downstairs, crying for help.

But the fire, which must have originated in the kitchen, was spreading quickly, and the flames licked his legs, causing him to cry out with pain.

He had just reached the bottom, when he heard his baby brother screaming, and without staying to rouse the neighbors, he fought his way upstairs again.

He adored his brother and was accustomed to the care of him, and, young though he was, he felt the awful responsibility of his position.

He did not know how he could get him downstairs in safety, but he could not leave him again, and before he could give the alarm they would probably both be burned to death.

But, with a heroic determination to save his little brother, he lifted him off the bed, covered him with a blanket and carried him to the top of the stairs. The staircase was old and rickety, and by that time the fire was crackling in heedless fury.

Almost suffocated with smoke and filled with fear, the boy fell back in despair.

But he knew the value of every moment, and, with a superhuman effort, tucked the baby under his arm, and, supporting himself against the wall, he stumbled with his burden through the flames.

Just as the poor mite reached the bottom, with an awful crash the staircase fell in a charred mass.

Then Freddy found that the blanket was burned from around his little brother, and he was so still and white that he feared that he was dead.

He was burned severely himself, but he forgot his own pain in his anxiety for Arthur, and, picking him up tenderly, he carried him out into the yard.

From an outhouse, with his brother clasped in his arms, he gazed fascinated at the burning house, where he was afterward found by two firemen who had come upon the scene, though too late.

The baby was found to be unconscious and charred beyond recognition, and although Freddy's condition was not quite so serious, he was prostrate with his exertions.

The firemen carried the children to the hospital, where the grief-stricken but thankful parents found them.

The next day the baby was pronounced out of danger, and Freddy was able to tell his story, which filled his hearers with wonder and admiration. It was evident that had it not been for his heroic conduct both children would have perished.

An account of his bravery appeared in all the leading papers, and he was the recipient of gifts from admirers from all over the country.

He is especially proud of a watch and chain bearing an inscription commemorating the incident, which was sent to him by a gentleman living in Chatham.

Let us hope that this young life, so nobly begun, will be one long series of heroic deeds, and that his behaviour will stimulate other children to be equally ready when the call comes.

And although the opportunity of saving a human life is not given to all, there is a heroism in deeds of love, gentleness, honor and truth, which is equally acceptable to our Heavenly Father.—Cassell's Little Folks.

Bird Cities.

All along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean are little cities inhabited by birds alone. Gardners Island, at the extremity of Long Island is the place where the fishhawks come during the breeding time, and owing to the friendly attitude of the family living on the island the ospreys have become tame and build their nests upon the ground instead of in the big trees.

In the Indian River, Florida, is a small island called Pelican Island. It received its name from being one of the favorite settlements for the pelicans during their nesting season.

These bird cities, or settlements are under the protection of the American Ornithological Union.

Persians at Prayer.

In Persia bells ring for prayers five times a day, and merchants, clerks and customers rush off to the mosques, leaving all business at a standstill.